

THE ARGOSY.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1868.

ANNE HEREFORD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

CHAPTER XIX.

A NIGHT ALARM.

IT was the loveliest autumn I had ever remembered. Clear, soft, balmy; the foliage glowing with its ruddy tints, the sky blue and beautiful.

There would be a fire in the grate of the oak-parlour, and the window thrown open to the lawn and the scent of the sweet flowers. One afternoon I sat there, a bit of work in my hand, the sprays of jessamine nearly touching me, and the far-off pine-walk looking almost as bright as though no ghost had the reputation of haunting it. Mr. Chandos sat at the table writing. Out of doors or in, we were very much together, and my heart was at rest. I'm afraid I had taken to think that the heaven of hereafter could not be more blissful than this that I seemed to be living in now.

His foot was weak again. Not to disable him from getting about; only to deter him from walking more than was absolutely necessary. It was all his own fault; as Mr. Dickenson, the surgeon, told him; he had persisted in using the ankle too much before it was quite strong.

Lady Chandos kept her rooms still; report said her bed; and the impression in the house was that she lay in danger. The discovery of the petty pilferer, or pilferers, appeared to be as far off as ever: but one or two strange things connected with the subject were about to occur.

"Will you put these on the hall-table for me, Anne?"

I turned to take the letters from him. When he did not let me save his foot in these little things, it made me cross, and I told him so. One of the letters was addressed to his sister.

"You have been writing to Madame de Mellissie, Mr. Chandos!"

"Yes. We heard from her this morning. She expects to be here in a day or two. Stay! I think I will show my mother what I have said. You shall put only the other one on the table."

The news fell on my heart like a shaft of ice. Chandos had become all too dear.

The other letter was to Mr. Haines; I remembered the name as that of an agent who had taken the house by the lodge-gates for Mr. Edwin Barley. It was sealed with the Chandos coat of arms in black wax. I had never seen Mr. Chandos use red. Lizzy Dene was passing through the hall as I laid the letter down. I observed that she looked at me; seemed to look at what I was doing; and Mrs. Penn and Hill were speaking on the stairs, nearly beyond view; whether they saw me or not, I could not say.

"Thank you," said Mr. Chandos, when I went in again. "What should I do without you to fetch and carry? I want that book now."

It lay on the side-table; a dreadfully dry scientific work. He locked his desk and took the book from me.

"You must put down your slavery to my stupid foot. When you get disabled, Anne, I'll do as much for you."

"You know the fault is yours, Mr. Chandos. Had you only been a little patient when the foot was getting better, it would have been strong before now. As to the slavery——"

"Well? What as to the slavery? Are you going to strike?"

I had been about to say that I *liked* the slavery, but stopped in time. The colour of embarrassment was coming into my cheek, and I turned it off with a light laugh and light words.

"I won't strike just yet. Not until Madame de Mellissie comes."

"Then suppose you lend me your shoulder?"

He could have walked quite well without it, as he knew and I knew; I dare say if put to it he might have walked to the railway station. But ah! the bliss of feeling his hand on me! if it were only half as great to him he had kept his ankle sick for ever!

I took up my work again; a pretty bag I was embroidering in gray and black silk for Lady Chandos. He sat on the other side the window, reading his book and talking to me between whiles. All things seemed full of rest and peace and love; a very paradise.

Soon—I dare say it was an hour, but time passed so swiftly—we heard footsteps come along the broad walk to the portico. I looked out to see whose they were.

"It is Mr. Dexter," I said to Mr. Chandos.

"Dexter! The very man I wanted to see. Now you need not go away," he added, as I began to gather up my work, "we are not about to talk treason. Don't you know, Anne, that I like to have you with me while I may."

He must have been thinking of the approaching separation that the advent of Emily would bring about. But I had to get some more silk, and went to fetch it, staying in my room some minutes. When I got back they were both seated at the table, some papers before them. I turned to the window and went on with my work.

The conversation appeared to be of little moment; of none to me; it was of leases, rents, repairs, and other matters connected with the estate. Presently Mr. Dexter mentioned that he had received a letter from Haines.

"Have you?" said Mr. Chandos. "I wrote to him this afternoon. What does he say?"

Mr. Dexter took a letter from his pocket-book, and put it into his master's hand, who ran his eyes over it.

"My letter will be useless, then, and I must write another," he observed when he had finished. "I'll get it, and show you what I said. It will save explanation."

"Let me get it for you, Mr. Chandos," I interposed, anxious to save him. And without waiting for permission I left the room. But the letter was not on the table.

"It is not there, Mr. Chandos; it is gone."

"It cannot be gone," he said, taking out his watch. "It is only four o'clock. Emily's letter is not put there yet."

Hickens was called. Hickens, in a marvel of consternation—at being asked what he had done with the letter—protested he had not seen it; he had not been in the hall that afternoon.

We all went out; it seemed so strange a thing; and I showed Mr. Chandos where I had laid the letter. It had not slipped down; it could not be seen anywhere. Mr. Chandos looked at me: he was evidently thinking that the spy was again at work.

"Was any one in the hall when you put the letter here, Miss Hereford?"

"Lizzy Dene was passing through it. And Mrs. Penn and Hill were standing on the stairs."

"They would not touch it," said Mr. Chandos, just as Lizzy Dene, hearing the commotion, looked from the door of the large dining-room. It was her place to keep the room in order, and she seemed to choose odd times to do it in. Mr. Chandos questioned her, but she said she had not touched the letter; had not in fact noticed it.

At this juncture Mrs. Chandos came down the stairs, dressed for going out, attended by Mrs. Penn. She enquired of Mr. Chandos what the matter was.

"A letter has mysteriously disappeared from the hall, Ethel," he replied.

"A letter disappeared! how strange!" she returned, in the rather vacant manner that at times characterized her. "Was it of consequence?"

"In itself, no. But these curious losses are always of consequence in another sense of the word. I beg your pardon, Mrs. Penn: did you speak?"

For Mrs. Penn, who had stood back in surprise, had advanced behind him, and was saying something in a low tone.

"Mr. Chandos! rely upon it the same hand that opened my letter has taken this one. You ought not to leave a stone unturned to discover the culprit. I speak in the interest of all."

Mr. Chandos nodded grave assent. He seemed to be in a hopeless puzzle. I fully suspected Lizzy Dene; and I think she saw something of this in my face.

"What should I do with a letter that was not mine?" she cried, her tone resentful, and addressing no one in particular. "If Mr. Chandos offered me a dozen of his letters to read, I'd rather be spared the trouble; I am no great scholar; and what good would they do me?"

The argument seemed all conclusive; at least to Mr. Chandos. I suspected the girl more and more.

"Well, Harry, I must leave you to your investigation, if I am to have a walk this afternoon," concluded Mrs. Chandos.

She went out and turned down the broad walk. Lizzy resumed her work in the dining-room, I and Mr. Dexter went back to the oak-parlour, and stood at the window: and then became aware that Mrs. Penn had lingered in the portico, talking with Mr. Chandos.

"Until recently I believed we had the most trustworthy set of servants that it is possible for any family to have," I heard him say. "What can there be in my letters that should interest them?"

"Nay," said Mrs. Penn, "I think it is a greater wonder what there should be in mine. I am a stranger to your servants: my affairs cannot be supposed to concern any one of them."

"It is my habit to leave letters on the table every day. They have never been touched or tampered with, so far as I know, until this afternoon."

"You cannot be sure of that. But what shall you do in the matter now?"

"I don't know what to do; it is the sort of thing that causes me to feel at a nonplus. Were I to have an officer in the house to watch, as you suggest, it might prove useless."

"Have you a suspicion of any one in particular?" she abruptly asked. And by this time Mr. Dexter had grown interested in the conversation, as well as I, and ceased talking to me.

"Not the slightest. Neither can you have, I suppose."

Mrs. Penn was silent.

"Have you?" repeated he, thinking her manner peculiar.

"I would rather not answer the question, Mr. Chandos, because it would inevitably be followed by another."

"Which is equivalent to admitting that your suspicions are directed to some one in particular," he returned, with awakened interest. "Why should you object to avow it?"

"Well, it is so," she replied. "I do think that all the circumstances—taking one loss, one disagreeable event with another—do tend to point suspicion to a certain quarter. But I may be wrong."

"To whom?" he asked.

"That is just the question that I knew would follow," returned Mrs. Penn, "and I must decline to answer it. No, Mr. Chandos; you possess the same facilities for observing and judging that I do: in fact greater ones: and if you cannot draw your own deductions, I certainly will not help you to them. I might be wrong, you know."

"You must allude to an inmate of Chandos?"

"I should deem it impossible that any but an inmate of Chandos could play these tricks. Where would be the opportunity?"

"Mrs. Penn, if you possess any clue; nay, if you think you have any well-founded cause of suspicion, you ought to impart it to me," he gravely said.

"Were I *sure* that my suspicions were correct, I would do so; but, as I say, they may be mistaken. Forgive me if I hint that perhaps your own eyes are shut closer than they need be."

She hastened away, leaving the impression of her mysterious words behind. I wondered very much if she alluded to Lizzy Dene.

That same evening I had an opportunity of asking her. Mr. Chandos went to the west wing after dinner, I sat near the lights, working at my bag, when Mrs. Penn came into the oak-parlour, not having troubled herself to knock for admittance.

"It's fine to be you, Anne Hereford," she said, putting herself into Mr. Chandos's chair by the fire. "I wish I had this room to sit in."

"Are the rooms up-stairs not comfortable?"

"I don't know about comfort: they are wretchedly dull. I'd as soon be cooped up in a prison. Not a soul to speak to from morning to night, but Mrs. Chandos. Here you have Mr. Chandos; full state and ceremony; and the chance of seeing all the visitors."

"All the visitors consist of a doctor now and then, and Mr. Dexter once a week, or so," I said, laughing.

"A doctor and an agent are better than nobody. I suppose," she added, after a pause, "they are all assembled in party conclave in the west wing; Mr. Chandos, Mrs. Chandos, and my lady."

"I wish Lady Chandos was better," I remarked.

Mrs. Penn turned round eagerly, her eye lighting with excitement.

"I *wish* I knew what it is that's the matter with her! I wish I knew! Do you never gather a hint of it from Mr. Chandos?"

"Never. But why should you be so desirous to learn? What is it to you?"

"I have my reasons," she replied, nodding her head. "I won't tell them to you this evening, but I have not made a vow that I never will. If she is insane, as I suspect, why then—but I'll say no more now. What a strange thing it is about that letter!"

"Very. You are suspecting some one in particular?"

"Well," she answered, sharply, turning her face to me.

"It is Lizzy Dene?"

"Who it is, or who it is not, is nothing to you," she rejoined, in the crossdest tone I ever heard. "I know this: I would give the worth of a dozen letters ten times over to bring the mystery to light. They may be suspecting you and me next."

"Mrs. Penn!"

"Yes, Mrs. Penn!" she retorted in a mocking tone. "You and I are the only strangers in the house, Anne Hereford."

As if my words had angered her past redemption, she quitted the room abruptly. Very soon Mr. Chandos returned to it, and the tea came in. He began talking of the lost letter—of the unpleasantness altogether. Should I tell him of my doubt? The old proverb runs, that if a woman deliberates she is lost: it proved so in my case, and I mentioned Lizzy Dene.

"Lizzy Dene!" repeated Mr. Chandos, in great surprise. "*Lizzy Dene!*"

"But indeed it is a doubt more than a suspicion; and it arises chiefly from my having found her in my room that night," I eagerly added, feeling half afraid of what I had done, and determined not to hint at her supposed alliance with Mr. Edwin Barley.

"Rely upon it, you are wrong, Anne," Mr. Chandos decided, without any pause. "Lizzy Dene would be the very last woman to act in a treacherous manner to our family. She may be foolishly superstitious, but she is honest as the day. I'll answer for *her*."

How could I say more?—unless my grounds against Lizzy Dene had been surer. Joseph came in for the tea-things, and Mr. Chandos went to his own sitting-room. I stood at the little table in the corner of the room nearest the window, putting my work-box to rights. Some of its reels were on the window-ledge, and I moved to get them.

I don't know why I should have done it; unthinkingly, I believe; but I drew aside the muslin curtain to look out on the lovely night, and found my face in contact (save for the glass that was between us) with that of another face, peering in. Terribly startled, I drew back with a scream, just as Mr. Chandos came into the room. Quick as lightning he laid forcible hold of me while I was explaining, put me in a chair in the sheltered corner close to the work-box, ordered me to stay in it—ordered me, and in the most peremptory manner—and turned to the window to fling it up. One moment and he had leaped out: but in his haste he had broken a pane of glass.

I sat there, trembling and shaking; the window open, the curtain waving gently in the night breeze—and the thought of that terrible face without. Mr. Chandos looked stern and white when he returned—not through the window—and blood was dripping from his hand.

"I can see no one: but I could not stay long, my hand bled so," he said, snatching up his white handkerchief which lay on the table, and winding it round the palm. "But now—Anne, do you think these can be fancies of yours? This is the second time."

"I wish I could think so. I am *certain* a man stood there, looking in. He had not time to draw away. I just moved to the window from that corner, so that he did not see me approaching."

"Whose face was it? That man's by the lodge-gates—Edwin Barley?"

My very fear—but I did not dare to say it. What I did say was the strict truth—that it had all passed so momentarily and I was so startled, as to allow no chance of recognition.

"Can you find me a piece of linen rag, Anne? I don't care to make a commotion over this. I dare say I can do up my hand myself: I'm a bit of a surgeon."

I ran up-stairs to get some, and began turning over the contents of my large trunk in search of it. In doing this, a small parcel, very small, got into my hands, and I looked at it with some curiosity, not remembering what it contained.

As I undid the paper two sovereigns fell into my hand. They were not mine; I possessed none. As I looked and wondered, a strange thought flashed through my mind: were they the two lost sovereigns marked by Mr. Chandos?

There was no time to stay speculating; Mr. Chandos was waiting for the rag. Finding it, I ran down.

"You ought to put your hand in warm water, Mr. Chandos. There may be fragments of glass in it."

"I was thinking so," he said; when at that moment Hickens came in with a letter. The man noticed the white handkerchief and its stains.

"You have met with an accident, sir!"

"Ah," said Mr. Chandos, in a tone of raillery, as if making light of the affair, "this comes, Hickens, of doing things in a hurry. You must bring me a basin of warm water. I attempted to open the window, not observing it was fastened, and my hand slipped through the glass. Close the shutters. At once."

Hickens went to the window: I stood by Mr. Chandos with the linen rag. "Presently," he nodded; "I must wait for the water. Open this for me, will you, Anne?"

I unsealed the letter, and opened it. In handing it to him, my eyes accidentally fell upon my own name.

"It is about me!" I exclaimed, in thoughtless impulse.

Mr. Chandos ran his eyes over the lines—there were but few—and a scowl contracted his brow. He read them over again, and then folded the letter with his one hand.

"Hickens, who brought this? When did it come?"

"It came but now, sir. A lad brought it to the back-door. I happened to be standing there and took it from him. 'For Mr. Chandos,' he said, and turned away. I thought how quickly he made off."

"Should you know him again?"

"No, sir, I think not. I'm not sure, though."

"Well, bring the warm water."

"Is the letter from Madame de Mellissie?" I asked.

"I don't know who it is from," said Mr. Chandos. "It is anonymous."

"Anonymous! And about me!"

I stood looking at him. I connected this letter with the two sovereigns I had just found: was any one at work to ruin me in the estimation of Chandos House?

"Mr. Chandos, that is not a pleasant letter, is it?"

"Anonymous letters never are pleasant ones," he rejoined. "If I had my way, the writers of such should all be shaken in a bag together and sunk in the bottom of the sea. Do not let it trouble you; it defeats its own ends."

"Will you allow me to read it?"

"It would give you no pleasure?"

"But it might give me some light; and light is what I want just now; I do indeed. Let me see it, Mr. Chandos! I request it as a favour."

"Very well. My showing it to you will prove the sort of estimation I have for it."

Taking the letter from his unresisting hand, I opened it and laid it before me. It ran as follows:—

"MR. CHANDOS,—It is rumoured that you have some trouble in your house just now, and are suspecting your servants. The probability is that they are honest; they have been with you long enough to be proved. There are two strangers under your roof: the companion to Mrs. Chandos, and the younger lady, Miss Hereford. Please just reflect that all the misfortunes have occurred since these ladies entered Chandos. In doing this, perhaps you will find a way out of the wood. The suggestion is offered by
A FRIEND."

"This would implicate Mrs. Penn as well as myself!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," he said. "Forgetting that Mrs. Penn is a sufferer. Or perhaps not knowing it."

The tears rose: I could not help it. "Then—do you doubt *me*, Mr. Chandos?"

He touched my arm; and those grave eyes of his, half laughing then, looked right into mine.

"Doubt you? So greatly that I am deliberating whether I shall not call in the police again and give you in charge."

It was said in jest I knew, but at that moment it told upon me, and the sobs were palpably near the surface. Hickens was heard approaching with the basin of water.

"Oh, Anne, Anne! you are a very simple child."

"Will you see to your hand, sir?"

"Ay, it wants seeing to."

It was the palm that was cut; badly, I thought. Mr. Chandos seemed to understand what to do, and dressed it himself with the butler's help, I watching the process. When we were alone again, I took the little parcel from my pocket, and gave it to Mr. Chandos.

"Will you please to open that, sir?"

"Two sovereigns," he cried, as he did so. "What of them?"

I told him all about it, where I found them. He held them close to the light, and smiled.

"They are the sovereigns I lost out of my desk, Anne."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure? Here are the marks. See."

Standing close I looked where he pointed. The marks were plain. I went to my seat, and sat down.

"And you found them in your trunk! Anne, who is your enemy in the house?"

"I did not know I had one, sir. So far as I am aware I have not given offence to any within it. I must quit it now."

"Oh, indeed! What else would you like to do?"

I could no longer keep the tears back; it was of no use trying, and they ran over my cheeks. "It seems to me, Mr. Chandos, that I am no longer safe in it."

"You are perfectly safe, Anne, for you possess in it a powerful protector. One who will not suffer harm to reach you; who will be a shield to you in every assault; who will guard annoyance from you so far as shall be practicable."

I knew that he alluded to himself, and thanked him in my heart. But—so far as was practicable! There it lay. If I really had a hidden enemy, who might shield me? Mr. Edwin Barley it could not be; and I fell back to the suspecting of Lizzy Dene.

Mr. Chandos began telling off the inmates on his fingers.

"There's my mother, Mrs. Chandos, myself, Hill, Hickens; for all these I can answer. Then come the servants. For some of them I can equally answer, Lizzy Dene being one; but I regard them all as honest and trustworthy."

"Therefore the uncertain ones are only Mrs. Penn and myself."

"And Mrs. Penn is certainly exempted," he rejoined, "For she has been meddled with in an equal degree with any of us."

"That leaves only me!"

"Just so; only you. But, Anne," bending those earnest eyes upon me, "I would answer for you with my *life*."

"If it is not Lizzy Dene that is my enemy, who else can it be?" I exclaimed, foolishly speaking what was in my thoughts.

"Why should you think it to be Lizzy Dene more than any one else?" he hastily cried, in a resenting sort of tone. "She can have no cause of enmity against you."

There flashed across me that interview with Mr. Edwin Barley. If it was Lizzy Dene who had held it, who was in league with him, no need to search for a motive.

"That I have an enemy is indisputable. The letter you have just received and these sovereigns prove it."

"Anne, Lizzy Dene could not have written such a letter as this."

That he was prejudiced in favour of Lizzy Dene, determined to admit nothing against her, seemed evident; and I let the subject drop.

But now the strangest incident was to occur; an alarming incident; nay, it might rather be called a scene. In the minute's silence that had supervened, Mrs. Penn glided into the room without notice. The word "glided" is not inapplicable; she came softly in, scarcely seeming to move, her face scared, her voice sunk to a whisper.

"Mr. Chandos! Do you know that there are mounted police outside the house?"

He rose from his seat, looking at her as if he thought she must be dreaming.

"Mounted police!" he repeated.

"They are riding quietly up, three of them; I saw their sabres flash in the starlight. I had gone to the library to get a book for Mrs. Chandos; she having sent to Hill for the key; when I thought I heard a noise as of horsemen, and opened the shutters to look out. Oh, Mr. Chandos! what can they have come for? They once rode up to a house where I was staying, in the same silent manner; it was to make investigations in a charge of murder."

I had seen Mr. Chandos turn pale before; you have heard me say so; but I never saw a tinge so livid in man or woman as that which overspread his countenance now. He retained nevertheless his self-possession; ay, and that quiet tone of command which somehow is rarely disobeyed.

"You will be so kind as return immediately to Mrs. Chandos," he calmly said to Mrs. Penn. "Close the doors of the east wing as soon as you have entered, and keep her attention amused. She is excitable—as you by this time probably know—and this visit must be kept from her cognizance."

Allowing no time for answer or dissent, he took Mrs. Penn by the hand somewhat peremptorily, and watched her go up-stairs. Then

he stole to the hall-door and put up its bar without noise. As for me, I do not know that I had ever in my whole life felt so sick and frightened. All the past scene at Mr. Edwin Barley's, when the mounted police had come there, recurred to me: and Mr. Chandos's manner completed the dread. I put my hands on his arm; all reticence was forgotten in the moment's terror; as he stood listening in the middle of the oak-parlour.

"Tell me what it is! Tell me!"

"Oh, Anne, this is an awful blow," he said, in the deepest agitation, as if he had never heard me. "I joked about the police coming to take you in charge, but——"

"Not for me! They cannot have come for me!" I reiterated foolishly, in my confused alarm.

"Would to heaven they had come for you! I mean, would they had come for one who could as readily be exonerated as you! Mercy! mercy! so the blow has fallen at last!"

The words brought to my memory what Mrs. Penn had said, about a sword hanging by a single hair over Mr. Chandos and his family. I don't think he knew what he was about. He walked across the hall towards the stairs, hesitated, and came back, listening evidently for the knocking of the police; all in the deepest agitation and alarm.

"It may be well for me not to go!" he muttered. "Better that I should be here to face them when they enter! Anne, run you and find Hill: bring her hither quickly: but make no alarm."

I knew it was the hour of supper in the housekeeper's room, and ran to it. Hill was seated at the head of the table, the upper-servants round her.

"Mrs. Hill," I said, appearing among them without ceremony, "Mr. Chandos wants you for a moment. Instantly, if you please."

"There! His hand has burst out bleeding again!" surmised Hickens, who occupied the chair opposite Hill. Mrs. Hill said nothing, but rose and followed me. As we passed through the hall, there came a loud ring at the front door, and a knocking at it as if with sabres.

"Hill," Mr. Chandos whispered, drawing her into the oak-parlour, and there was a world of dread and terror in his tone, "the police are outside the house, mounted."

She shrieked out aloud, making the room ring. The woman actually trembled all over.

"Hush!" interrupted Mr. Chandos. Don't lose *your* senses, Hill."

"Oh, Mr. Harry! the police at last! It's what I have dreamt of ever since that awful night!"

"Well, you and I must be calm. You know the plan decided upon; if it ever came to this. I may not go; I must stay and face it. Make you haste! And—Hill! *lock* the outer door of the east wing on the outside: Mrs. Chandos must not see these men."

Hill did not stay to listen. She appeared to take in all, and was flying up the stairs, breathless and panting. There came another ring, another noise as with the sabres; and Robin, one of the under men, who was coming across the hall, increased his speed. Mr. Chandos arrested him.

"Robin, desire Hickens to attend himself. I wish it."

The man turned back, and Mr. Chandos stood for a moment against the wall, his hands on his pale face.

"Dear Mr. Chandos!" I said, in emotion great as his, "why are you afraid? what dreadful thing is it? Confide in me! tell me!"

"That you may run from me, as the rest will do! You have said the word, Anne—dreadful. That is it."

Hickens was advancing to the hall. Mr. Chandos went out to him; I looked from the parlour-door.

"Hickens," said Mr. Chandos, speaking with apparent carelessness, "these may be the police at the door. If so, they may enter."

"Them police again, sir!" returned Hickens, in consternation. "Weren't they satisfied with their last visit? Whatever can they want at this hour?"

"That's my business," replied Mr. Chandos. And Hickens turned to the entrance.

"What a cowardly donkey that Joseph is, barring up the house before bed-time!" quoth Hickens to himself as he threw wide the door.

Threw it wide, and admitted two of the officers. The other one remained with the horses.

CHAPTER XX.

SEEN IN THE GALLERY BY MOONLIGHT.

MR. CHANDOS advanced with suavity; the officers saluted him and took off their hats. He held his handkerchief to his face, as if fearing the draught: I knew that it was to shade his livid countenance.

"A late visit, gentlemen! To what am I indebted for it?"

He had been gradually withdrawing to the oak-parlour as he spoke, and they came with him. I drew back in confused indecision, and stood humbly in the remotest and darkest corner. I had not courage to quit the room, for I must have brushed by them: I hoped that Mr. Chandos would see and dismiss me. But no: he closed the door, in the face of Hickens, whose state of mind was a pretty even balance between wonder and dismay.

"We could not get here sooner, sir," observed one of the officers,

who spoke quite like a gentleman, "but we hope the delay has not been inconvenient to you. The inspector, to whom your note was addressed, was out when it arrived, so that it was not opened immediately."

Had the sentence been spoken in an unknown tongue, it could not more completely have puzzled Mr. Chandos, to judge by his looks.

"What note do you speak of?" he asked.

"The note you sent in to-day."

This appeared to be no elucidation to Mr. Chandos.

"Will you tell me what its contents were?"

"We got but one, sir. It requested two or three of us to be here to-night, mounted. It intimated that the thief, who has been playing tricks in your house, was discovered, and would be given up to us. Our inspector wondered why we were wanted to come mounted."

Oh, the change that fell over the face of Mr. Chandos! the eager light of hope, the vivid rush of renewed colour! It was as one awakening from death to life.

"Gentlemen," he said with a smile, as he pointed to seats, "I fear a trick has been played upon *you*. I have not written to your inspector, and most certainly possess, as yet, no clue to the parties who have been so disagreeably busy at Chandos."

They seemed hardly to believe him. For my own part I could scarcely tell what was real, what not.

"But you must not go back without refreshment, although you have had a useless ride," concluded Mr. Chandos, when some further explanation had passed. "It shall be brought in at once," he added, ringing for Hickens. "And this young lady," looking at me, "will obligingly see the housekeeper and bid her hasten it."

I obeyed the look and followed him into the hall. Hickens was there.

"Supper, Hickens. These gentlemen will take some before their departure. Bring the best of what you have, and be quick over it."

Hickens moved away with alacrity: the word "departure" had reassured him, and also seemed to afford hope that his curiosity would be satisfied. Mr. Chandos caught my hand and drew me through the door to the foot of the stairs. His own hand was trembling, and cold as ice: unconsciously, I think to himself, he laid it on my shoulder, and spoke in the gentlest whisper.

"Go to the west wing, Anne. Knock at the outer door, but do not attempt to enter. Hill will answer you. Tell her to inform Lady Chandos that it is a false alarm; that the officers have only come respecting what was recently lost from my desk, and that I have ordered supper for them. Say that I will be with my mother as soon as possible, but I remain at present to entertain them."

He returned swiftly to the parlour, closing the door, leaving me to

proceed on my errand. Hill answered my knock, her face and her cap of an equal whiteness, and I delivered the message, speaking in a whisper. Strangely relieved seemed she, at least in an equal degree with Mr. Chandos, and she made me repeat the little I had heard said by the officers, as if scarcely daring to believe the good tidings, without confirmation.

"Heaven be praised!" she exclaimed; "it would just have killed my lady. Bless you, child, for a good girl."

That Hill's relief of mind must have been something extraordinary for her to bless *me*, one could but acknowledge; and I excused her shutting the baize door in my face.

In less than half an hour, I heard the police ride away, as I sat in my chamber, and Mr. Chandos passed to the west wing. It was very dull for me in that lonely bedroom, and only half-past nine o'clock; so I thought I might go down again. Hickens was putting the things together on the supper tray.

"Miss, do you know what those men came for?" he asked.

"Well, Hickens, not exactly. Nothing at all to be afraid of, so far as I could gather. I heard Mr. Chandos laughing with them when they went away."

"Oh, I heard that; I was rung for to show 'em out," returned Hickens. "My opinion is this, miss, that it's just a scandal for policemen to ride up at will in the dark night to a gentleman's seat—almost a nobleman's—and if I were Mr. Chandos I'd let them know it. Swords clanging to 'em, indeed! What next?"

He went away with his tray. Five minutes afterwards Mr. Chandos came down. He was so gay; his step was light, his face smiling. It was only the reaction that sometimes sets in after deliverance from great fear. I had not thought to see him again that night: and stupidly said so.

"No! I came to look after you; lest you should have melted away with terror. Were you very much scared, Anne?"

"Yes; just at first."

"Take it for all in all this has been a sensational evening," he resumed, laughing. "My accident at the window; your discovery of the marked money in your box; and the visitation of the police. Private families cannot in general boast of so much amusement all at once."

I looked at him wistfully. After the intense agitation and dread he had betrayed, this light tone sounded very unnatural; almost like a mocking make-believe.

"Mr. Chandos, I fear you live in some great peril," was my timid rejoinder. "I suppose I may not be told what it is; but I wish I could ease you; I wish I could avert it from you, whatever it may be."

As if by magic, his mood changed, and the dark shade came back

to his countenance. "So you won't let me cheat myself, Anne! I was trying if I could do it."

"If you would but tell me what it is! If I could avert it from you!"

"No living being can do that, Anne. I wish I could forget it, if only for a moment."

"And you cannot?"

"Never; by night or by day. I appear as the rest of the world does; I laugh, I talk; but within lies ever that one terrible care, weighing me down like an incubus."

How terrible it was, I could see even then, as he covered his eyes for a moment with his wasted hand.

"But to-night has brought me a great relief—though it may be but temporary," he resumed, looking up. "How thankful I felt when the police explained their errand, God alone can ever know."

"But what did you fear they had come for?"

"That I cannot tell you. Not upon quite so harmless a one as it turned out to be."

"Better, perhaps, that they had come for me."

Mr. Chandos smiled—as well he might at the words; and passed to a gayer strain.

"Which of the three would you have preferred to ride before, had I given you into custody for finding that money of mine in your possession?"

But I did not answer in the same jesting spirit; I could not so readily forget my alarm, or their hidden trouble. Very gravely, for it was nearly bed-time, I put my hand out to wish him good-night. He took it within both of his, and there was a pause of silence.

"Anne," he said, his low voice sounding strangely solemn in the stillness of the room, "you have been to-night forced into what may be called a species of confidence as to our unhappy secrets; at least, to have become cognizant that Chandos has things to be concealed. Will you be true to us—in so far as not to speak of this?"

"I will."

"In the house and out of it?"—and he seemed to lay emphasis on the "in."

"I will be true as heaven," I answered in my earnestness. "I will seem to forget that I know it myself."

"Thank you, my best friend. Good-night."

I had come up earlier than usual; it was not ten o'clock; and I thought I might read for half an hour without transgressing any good rule. But where had I left my book? Looking about I could not see it.

It occurred to me then. I had been sitting reading in the gallery window for some minutes before dinner; and must have left the book there. It was but a few steps and I went to fetch it.

There it was. I found it by feel, not by sight. The moon was bright again, but the window-shutters were closed and barred. It was that beautiful story, the "Heir of Redclyffe." Madame de Mellissie had bought the Tauchnitz edition of it in Paris, and left it behind her at Chandos. Soon after she left I had found it and read it; and was now dipping into it again.

But now—as I took it in my hand, there occurred a very strange thing, frightening me nearly to death. Turning from the window, the whole length of gallery was before me up to the door of the west wing, the moonlight shining into it in places from the high windows above. There, midway in the passage, the moonlight revealing it, was a shadowy sort of form; looking like nothing on earth but an apparition.

I was in the shade; in the dark; remember that. Gliding along slowly, one of its arms stretched out, looking just as if it were stretched out in warning to me to escape—and I had not the sense then to remember that I must be invisible—on it came. A tall, thin, skeleton of a form, with a white and shadowy face. There was no escape for me: to fly to my own room would be to meet it; and no other door of refuge was open.

It has never been your fate, as I feel sure, my gentle reader, to be at one end of a gallery in a haunted house at night and see a ghost gliding towards you from the other; so please don't laugh at me. What my sensations were I can neither describe nor you conceive: I cannot bear to think of them even now. That I beheld the ghost said to haunt Chandos, my sick heart as fully believed in that moment as it believed in Heaven. Presence of mind forsook me; all that the wildest imagination can picture of superstitious terror assailed me: and I almost think—yes, I do think—that I might have lost my senses or died, but for the arrival of succour.

Oh, believe me! In these awful moments, which have on occasion come to people in real life far more certainly and terribly than anything ever represented in fiction, believe me, God is ever at hand to send relief. The overstrung mind is not abandoned to itself: very, very rarely indeed are our guardian angels absent, or unready to work by an earthly instrument.

It came to me in the person of Mr. Chandos. Ascending the stairs, a candle in his hand, softly whistling in unconcern, he came. It was no moment for deliberation: had it been a king or emperor, it had been all the same to me. With a great cry of anguish; with a low prolonged shriek of terror, that burst from me in the tension of nerves and brain; with a clasp of his arms, as if I dare not let him go again, I laid hold of him; dropping the book on the carpet of the gallery.

I suppose he put the wax-light down; I suppose he got over his astonishment in some way: all I knew was that in a moment he was holding me in his arms, trying to soothe my sobbing. Reaction had

come, and with it tears; never before had I cried so violently; and I clung to him still in an agony of terror, as one, drowning, clings to the living. But nothing remained in the gallery. Whatever had been in it had vanished.

"What is all this? What has alarmed you?"

"It was there, it was coming towards me!" I whispered hysterically in answer. "Oh, forgive me! Hold me! I feel as though I should die."

"What was coming?" he inquired.

"The same—I think—that is seen in the grounds. The ghost."

"How can you be so foolish? how can you take up these absurd fancies?" he remonstrated, in a sharp tone, moving some steps away from me.

"I did, Mr. Chandos; I did. It came along with its arm raised, as if to warn me off: a tall skeleton of a form, with shadowy features, the hue of the dead. Features that bear, in their formation, a great resemblance to yours."

Was it fancy? or was it fact?—that his own features, as I spoke, assumed an ashy tint, just as they had done when the police-officers came?

"What were you doing out here?" he asked, in the same sharp accent.

"I only came to the window-seat to get a book. I saw it as I turned to go back."

"You saw nothing," he persisted, with some warmth. "I am astonished at you, Miss Hereford: the fancy was the creation of your own brain, and nothing more. Pray, if the ghost was here then, where has it disappeared to now?"

"I don't know. I think it seemed to go back towards the west wing. It was certainly there."

"You are certainly silly," was his response. "A vast deal more so than I had given you credit for."

"Ah, Mr. Chandos, you cannot reason me out of my eyesight and my senses. Thank you, thank you ever for coming up the stairs just then: I do believe I should have died; or lost my reason."

Picking up the "Heir of Redclyffe," I walked to my room, went in, and shut the door. Mr. Chandos pulled it open again with a sharp pull.

"Forgive me if I have been harsh. Good night."

"Oh, yes, sir; I know how foolish it must seem to you. Good night."

"Go to rest in peace and safety, Anne. And rest assured that no ill, ghostly or human, shall work you harm while I am at hand to prevent it."

I closed the door and bolted it, a vague idea in my mind that a bolted door is a better safeguard against a ghost than an unbolted one. Mr. Chandos's footsteps died away in the direction of the west wing.

With the morning, a little of the night's impression had vanished, for the sun was shining brilliantly. Ghosts and sunlight don't accord with

each other ; you cannot make them amalgamate. Ghosts at midnight *are* ghosts : in the warm and cheery morning sun they are of doubtful identity ; or, at any rate, have vanished very far off, into unknown regions. I dressed myself as usual, in better spirits than might be supposed, and went down. Mr. Chandos was earlier than I, and stood at the window in the oak-parlour. He took my hand and retained it for some moments in silence, I standing side by side with him, and looking from the window as he did.

"And how is the ghost this morning, Anne?"

"I wish you would regard me as a rational being, Mr. Chandos ! Do any thing but treat me as a child."

"Nay, I think you proved yourself both irrational and a child last night," he laughingly said.

"Indeed I did not. I wish you had seen what I did."

"I wish I had," was the mocking answer. "Anne, trust me : there is no ghost inside Chandos, whatever they may say as to there being one out of it."

"I don't know how I shall be able to go up-stairs alone at night again."

"Nor I. You will want Hill and half a dozen lighted torches to escort you. Do you remember my remarking that last evening, taking one event with another, was a sensational one? But I did not suppose it was to wind up with anything so grand as a ghost."

The mocking tone, the ridicule vexed me. It was as if he ridiculed me. In spite of my good sense and my good manners, the vexation came into my eyes.

"There ! We will declare a truce, Anne, and let the ghost drop. I don't want to make you angry with me."

"I am not angry, sir. I can never repay all your kindness to me ; and especially that last one of coming to my relief last night."

"Which was accidental. Shall I tell you how you can repay it all, Anne?"

His voice had dropped to earnest seriousness ; his eyes, a strangely-sad gravity seated in their depths, looked yearningly into mine.

"I wish you could, sir."

"Let this matter of your ghost be a perfect secret between you and me. One to be disclosed to no one."

"Certainly. I promise."

That some great reason prompted the request was unmistakeable : that there were certain interests attaching to this "ghost," whether it might walk out of doors or in, could but be apparent. A mysterious awe—pardon the words—pervaded the subject altogether ; and had from the moment I first entered Chandos. How I wished he would take me into his confidence !—if it were only that I might show him that I would be true and faithful. But for the strange reticence imposed by

love when once he takes possession of the soul, I might have boldly suggested this.

He leaned out of the window, inhaling the crisp air of the bright October morning. Courage at length came to me to say a word.

"Of course, sir, I do not fail to see that there are interests here that involve caution and care, though I cannot think how, or what they are. If you would entrust me with them—and I could help in any way—I should be glad. I would be so true."

"Ay, I am sure you would be. Latterly a vision has crossed me of a time—a possible future when it might be disclosed. But it is neither probable nor near. Indeed, it seems like a dream even to glance at it."

He had been looking at the far-off skies as he spoke, as though *he* were in a dream. The urn was brought in, and I went to the table to make the tea. Newspapers and letters arrived; he was buried in them during breakfast, and carried them afterwards to his own sitting-room.

I saw his horse brought to the door in the course of the morning. In crossing the hall to go to it, he looked in at the oak-parlour. I was mending gloves.

"Hard at work! Do you wear mended gloves?"

"Everybody is not Mr. Chandos of Chandos. Poor governesses have to wear many things that the gay world does not. And Mrs. Paler has not paid me."

"Shall I bring you some gloves home to-day?"

"Oh, no indeed; no, thank you, Mr. Chandos," I answered, speaking and colouring much more vehemently than the occasion called for.

"Are you going for a ride?"

"I am going to the police-station at Warsall, to endeavour to get a sight of that note."

"Who could have written it? It seems so useless a hoax to have played."

"Useless?—As it turned out, yes. But it strikes me the intention was neither harmless nor useless," he added, in a thoughtful tone.

"Shall you not institute an inquiry into it, Mr. Chandos?"

"No. I shall pick up what there may be to pick up in a quiet way; but I shall make no stir in it. I have my reasons. Good-bye, Anne. Mind you mend those gloves neatly."

"Good-bye, sir. Take care of Black Knave—that he does not throw you again."

He went away laughing at his own remark on the gloves, or mine on Black Knave, went up to the west wing, and was down again in a minute. The horse was a favourite, and he patted him and spoke to him before mounting. The groom rode a bright bay horse; a fine animal also.

Surely there was no harm in my looking from the window to watch them away! But Mrs. Penn, who came into the oak-parlour at the moment, appeared to think there was. Her lips were drawn in and her brow had a frown on it as I turned to her. With the want of ceremony that distinguished her customary behaviour to me, she flung herself back in an easy-chair, her arms hanging down listlessly, her feet stretching out. Her gown was a bright muslin of beautiful hue and texture; her glowing hair had purple ribbons in it and black lace lappets.

"What a place this Chandos seems to be!" she exclaimed. "Did you ever see such a house, Miss Hereford? That visit of the police—riding up with their naked sabres!"

"The sabres were in their sheaths."

"They clanked; I know that. I can tell you it gave me a turn. And after all, after terrifying us nearly to death, Mr. Chandos, I hear, entertained them amicably at supper!"

"It was as well to be civil; it was not their fault that they came. A trick had been played on them."

"A trick? I don't understand."

"A note was written in Mr. Chandos's name to the inspector of police at Warsall, asking for mounted officers to be sent over. They supposed they were coming to take into custody the person who has been playing tricks at Chandos. Tricks: that was the word used."

Mrs. Penn stared at me. "Who wrote the note?"

"Mr. Chandos does not know. He received a note himself also last night, an anonymous one: insinuating that as you and I were the only strangers at Chandos, one of us must be the guilty person."

"What next?" demanded Mrs. Penn, angrily taking up the words. "Does Mr. Chandos suppose I stole my own lace and rifled my own letter?"

"Mr. Chandos knows better. I say it was the anonymous letter that suggested the idea to him. But I thought it seemed to point more to me than to you."

"Mr. Chandos would not admit the idea—would he?"

"Oh, no. I am quite easy on that score. Mr. Chandos knows he may trust me."

Whether Mrs. Penn thought the remark seemed to reflect on herself; to shift the imputation on her, failing me, I could not tell; certainly no such thing had been in my mind. Her eyes grew angry: she rose from the chair, and shook her finger in my face.

"Anne Hereford, I have warned you once not to allow yourself to grow attached to Mr. Chandos; I now warn you again. There are reasons—I may not speak them—why it could bring you nothing but misery. Misery! It is but a faint word for it: disgrace, shame; more than you in your inexperience can imagine of evil. Better that you

fell in love with the lowest man-servant attached to the place than with Harry Chandos."

The tell-tale crimson arose in my cheeks, and I bent to pick one of the late rose-buds, entwining themselves about the trellis-work outside.

"Child! Should harm ever come of this, recollect that I did my best to warn you. I am older than you by many years; had I ever possessed a daughter, she might have been of your age. Where has Mr. Chandos gone?" she resumed, in a different tone.

"To Warsall. He would like to discover the writer of the note to the police."

"You seem to be quite in his confidence," remarked Mrs. Penn.

"He told me so much—that he intended to ride thither. No very great stretch of confidence."

"There are many things I don't like in this house," she continued, after an interval of silence. "What do you suppose they did last night? Actually locked us up in the east wing! Turned the key upon us! I was coming forth to see if I could find out what those police were doing, and I found myself a prisoner! Madam Hill's act and deed, that was."

"Indeed!" was my reply, not choosing to tell her that I had heard the order given by Mr. Chandos.

"Hill takes a vast deal too much upon herself. I thought it could be no one else, and taxed her with it, asking how she could presume to lock up me. She coolly replied that she had never thought of me at all in the affair, but of Mrs. Chandos, who was of a timid nature, and would not like the sight of policemen inside the house. Poor thing! she has cause," added Mrs. Penn, in a sort of self-soliloquy.

"Mrs. Chandos has?"

"Ay. No unhappy prisoner escaped from Portland Island, hiding his head anywhere to elude notice, has more cause to dread the detective officers of justice than she. Your friend, Harry Chandos, has the same. I would not lead the life of apprehension he does, for untold gold. Look at the skeleton it makes of him! he is consuming away with inward fever. You were surprised when that London physician was brought down to him; the household were surprised: I was not."

"How came you to be so deep in their secrets?"

"Had I not been in their secrets, and shown them that I was, I should not have been admitted an inmate of that east wing," she answered. "Do you know, when the police came last night—but I had better hold my tongue, or I may say too much."

To avoid doing so, possibly, she quitted the room. But there were few women—as I believed—less likely than Mrs. Penn to be betrayed into speaking on impulse what it might not be expedient to speak.

The adventures of the day were not over for me. I wish they had been! I finished my gloves; I practised; I did a little German; and

in the afternoon, when it was getting late, I strolled out with my book, the "Heir of Redclyffe," and sat down between the house and the lodge-gates in a sheltered seat; where I could see who passed to and from the house, without being seen.

The morning had been very lovely; the evening was setting in less so; a sighing wind whistled amidst the trees, clouds passed rapidly over the face of the sky, and the autumn leaves fell and were whirled about the paths. Did it ever strike you that there is something melancholy in these dying leaves? Many people like autumn best of the four seasons; but I think there is in it a great deal of sadness. It brings our own autumn of life too forcibly to the mind: as the leaves of the trees decay, and fall, and die; so must we when our time shall come.

I was listening to the rustle of the leaves, and watching—if this is to be a true confession—for Mr. Chandos, when he rode by to the house. Inclination would have led me after him; common sense and propriety kept me where I was. Presently, I saw Lizzy Dene advancing quietly along one of the dark and private paths. She wore her cloak and bonnet, and had a basket on her arm, as if she had been on an errand to the village. In a moment some gentleman had met her and they were talking together. It was Edwin Barley. There were so many outlets from the broad walk that almost any of these private paths could be gained at will.

Lizzy Dene came on almost directly; she seemed to be in a hurry, and turned off towards the kitchens. The next to appear in the same walk was Mrs. Penn, striking right across the steps of Mr. Edwin Barley.

I was so sheltered by surrounding trees that they could not see me; but as they came nearer, walking side by side, Mrs. Penn's eye caught mine. She quickened her pace, and Mr. Edwin Barley turned back, raising his hat to her.

"Here you are with your book," she began. "Is it not too dark to see to read?"

"Almost. Have you been for a walk, Mrs. Penn?" I asked, hoping she'd not mention the name of Edwin Barley.

"I have been to the village post. I don't care to trust my letters now to the hall-table. Did you notice a gentleman with me down there, Miss Hereford?"

"I think I did see some one walking with you. It is dark amid all those trees."

"I want to know his name. He has accosted me once or twice lately. A very civil, gentlemanly man."

"Is he! He has spoken to me, and I—I did not think him so. At least, I did not much like him. He lives in that house by the lodge-gates."

"Oh, then, it must be Mr. Edwin Barley. Did you know his name?"

"Yes."

"He is a friend of the people here, I suppose. He stopped me just now and began asking after the health of Lady Chandos, as if he had an interest in it."

"I should not answer any of his questions at all, if I were you, Mrs. Penn."

"Why not?"

"You don't know anything of him, or what his motives may be for inquiry. I once heard Mr. Chandos warn him off these grounds; after that, he has no right to enter them. I think his doing so looks suspicious."

"I think you must be a suspicious young lady to fancy it," returned Mrs. Penn with a laugh. "You were certainly born to be a *vielle* fille, Anne Hereford. They are always ultra-cautious."

"I dare say I was."

"When a gentleman—and a neighbour, as you now say he is—makes inquiries in passing after the invalids of the family you may be staying with, I do not see any harm in answering. One can't turn away like a bear and say I will not tell you."

"As you please. I do not think Mr. Chandos would approve of your speaking to him."

"Talking of Mr. Chandos, has he returned from that police errand yet?"

"I saw him ride past half an hour ago."

"I must hasten home," she returned, moving away. "Mrs. Chandos cannot be left for long. I have run all the way back from the post, and I ran to it."

What a strangely persevering man that Edwin Barley seemed to be! If Mrs. Penn knew—as she evidently did know—the dark secrets of the Chandos family, what might he not get out of her? I nearly made up my mind to inform Mr. Chandos.

Alas for me! for my poor courage! Turning a sharp corner by the alcove to go home, I came upon him standing there; Edwin Barley. Was he waiting for me, or for Mrs. Penn? But she had gone by the other path. It was too late to retreat. I essayed to do it, but he placed himself in my way.

"Not so fast, young lady. I have been expecting you to come up: I saw you in the distance, and waited to exchange a word with you. Why! you won't be so discourteous as to refuse!"

"I cannot stay now, thank you."

"Oh, yes you can—when I wish it. I want to inquire after the health of the family. There's no getting anything out of anybody: they 'can't tell me how my lady is, save from hearsay;' they 'never see her,' they 'see nearly as little of Mr. Chandos.' You and I can be more confidential."

"No, we cannot, sir. I never see Lady Chandos, any more than others do."

"Which you cannot say of Mr. Harry; you see rather much of him," retorted Mr. Edwin Barley, with a parting of the lips that showed the subject vexed him. "You and he are together always—as the news is brought to me."

"Did Mrs. Penn tell you that?" I asked, my colour and my anger rising together.

"Mrs. Penn!"

"The lady you have just parted with," I answered, supposing he did not know her by name.

"Mrs. Chandos's companion. *She's* none too civil to me. You had a visit from the mounted police last evening; an unexpected one, rumour runs. Did their sudden appearance confound Mr. Harry Chandos?"

How he seemed to know things! Did he get them from mere rumour, or from Lizzy Dene? I remained silent.

"Did they bring, I ask, confusion to Mr. Chandos? Did he exhibit the aspect, the terror, of one who—who has been guilty of some great crime, and dreads to expiate it?"

"I cannot tell you, sir."

"You were with him, I know that much," he returned, in the same commanding, angry, imperative tone of voice I had once heard him use to my aunt Selina.

"But what if I was? I cannot say how Mr. Chandos felt or thought."

"You *can*—if you choose. I asked you how he looked; what his manner betrayed: not what he felt or thought."

Loving *him* as I did, bound to his interests, could I be otherwise than on my guard? Nevertheless there must have been that in my tone and look that carried doubt to Mr. Edwin Barley.

"Mr. Chandos spoke to the officers quite calmly, sir. They were admitted at once, and he invited them into the sitting-room."

He looked at me keenly: I say, there must have been some doubt on his mind. "Are you aware that I know you, Anne? I think you must know me. As your uncle, your only living relative, I have a right to question you of these and other things."

My heart beat violently. Nearly too sick to speak felt I: and the words shook as they issued from my lips.

"You are not my uncle, sir. Selina was my aunt, but ——"

"And as Selina's husband, I became your uncle, Anne, by law. She is dead, but I am living: your uncle still. So you did know me?"

"I have known you, sir, ever since the day I first saw you here."

"It is more than I did by you, young lady; or I should not have allowed you to remain so quietly at Chandos. For the sake of my dead wife, I hold an interest in your welfare: and *that* will not be enhanced by your companionship with Harry Chandos."

The hint conveyed by the words half frightened me to death. *He* allow me! *he* assume a right to control me! I spoke out in my sick terror.

"You cannot have any power over me or my actions, Mr. Edwin Barley."

"Indeed I have, Anne. The law would say so. Do you know who Mrs. Penn is?" he abruptly asked.

"I don't know who she is or where she comes from," was my reply, glad he had put a question at last that I could answer honestly. "Will you please to let me go, sir; it is getting dark."

"Not just yet. You must first reply to a question or two I wish to ask touching Harry Chandos. To begin with: does he go often from home."

Sick, faint, weak though I was, I had presence of mind to put up one little sentence of prayer to be helped to do right: and that right I knew lay in denying him all information.

"I cannot tell you anything whatever about Mr. Chandos—or what he does—or what any one else does. As long as I am in the family, protected by them, trusted by them, it is dishonourable even to listen to such questions. But indeed I know nothing. If the Chandos family have secrets, they do not tell them to me."

"I should not imagine they would. I am not asking you for secrets. There are reasons why I wish to learn a little of their common everyday doings. This, at any rate, is a simple question: Does Mr. Harry Chandos —"

"It is of no use, sir; I will not answer that or any other. Pray do not stop me again! I hope you will pardon me for reminding you that I heard Mr. Chandos desire you not to intrude on these grounds: I think you ought to obey him, sir."

His face, always stern, grew fierce in its anger. Perhaps it was only natural that it should. He raised his hand before me.

"I hold the Chandoses under my finger and thumb. A little movement" (here he closed them) "and they may go trooping out of the kingdom to hide their disgrace; your friend, Mr. Harry, with all his high and mighty pride, leading the van. It will not be long first. By the obedience you owed your Aunt Selina, my dead wife; by the tenderness for her cherished memory, I order you to speak. You must do so, Anne."

One single moment of hesitation—I am ashamed to confess to it; but his voice and manner were so solemn—and my resolve returned, fixed and firm.

"I have said that I will not. Now, or ever."

He laid hold of me by the two arms as if he were going to shake me; his angry face, with its beautiful white teeth—he always showed them when in anger—close to mine. You see, the old fear I used to have of

him as a child clung to me still, and I shrieked out loud twice in my terror. I had always been wanting in presence of mind.

It all passed in a moment. *What*, I hardly knew. There was a crash as if the slender hedge gave way; and Mr. Chandos was holding me behind him, having flung Mr. Edwin Barley back against the opposite tree.

(To be continued.)

A RECOLLECTION.

A LADY sat in her garden bower
In the wealthy Eastern clime,
And her dark eye brightened as hour by hour
Passed on to the day's decline.
And her heart beat higher as she looked for the one
Who would be her side ere the set of sun.

The autumn came with its days of light,
And again that girl was there:
But the burning cheek shone so intensely bright
They saw not the still despair.
Or that he, for whose love she had bartered her own,
Knelt at the shrine of a fairer one.

The seasons passed on till the spring came round,
With its chill, deceitful breath;
And men looked on the girl, and sagely spoke
Of consumption: which leads to death.
But none of them glanced at the cause of doom,
As they followed the girl to her forefathers' tomb.

THE YOUTH OF MILTON.

THERE is an Eastern story of a king who, having lived the greater part of his life in a magnificent palace, the walls of which were of pure gold, was one day seized with a strong desire to know where the precious metal had its origin. This wish increased rapidly, and at length became so powerful that the monarch could enjoy neither his seraglio nor his fig-trees, nor any other of the pleasures which the Prophet has allowed to the faithful. One day as he was sitting on a little hill in his garden to catch the cold evening air, with his mind occupied in its usual course of absorbing reflection, he beheld close to him a diminutive, misshapen figure. The features of the face were strangely distorted, the eyes shone with an unearthly brilliancy, and the fingers of the hands were crooked and armed with long claws. The king started up in some alarm at the sight of this apparition. "Fear not, O king," said the strange visitor; "I am come to show thee that which thou desirest to know." "Who art thou, and how dost thou know what I desire?" demanded the king, who was a bold man, and had conquered his first terror. "I am the spirit who guards the sources of the precious metals. I have long heard thee breathe forth ardent desires to know something of my kingdom, and I am come to lead thee thither." The king was beyond measure delighted at this declaration; and thereupon (the spirit having seized him by the hand) they began a very singular journey. At some words muttered in an unknown language by the spirit, the earth opened beneath their feet, and the king found himself descending, with the swiftness of thought, through long dark passages and tunnels. At last they paused, and when the king had somewhat recovered the dizziness consequent upon his late remarkable mode of travelling, he began to look about him, for the spirit said that they had now arrived in his kingdom. He found that they were standing in a vast dimly-lit cavern, surrounded by huge lumps of some dingy yellow substance. The king demanded where the gold was, and the spirit pointed to the yellowish masses before mentioned. "Impossible!" cried the king. "The gold in my palace is so bright that I can scarce bear to look upon it."

"Learn from this, O king, that the best things in the world often originate in the lowest and poorest beginnings." And the king, after listening, went home a wiser man.

Now those who, after reading the works of our chief authors, or the stories of our greatest men's deeds, turn to their origins, and look into

their earliest years, will often experience much the same surprise as did the monarch in the tale. Who, as he listened to the eloquence of Thurlow, would have believed that as a child he had played with the soapsuds in a barber's shop? Who, as he reads the polished verse of Goldsmith, would have supposed that he had been educated in a dame's school? Yet such is the glorious prerogative of genius and industry. The son of the mechanic may inhabit the stately mansion next door to the son of the peer. The boy who galloped the wild unsaddled cart-colt over the heath, may thunder from the benches of the Opposition in the face of him who in his childhood cantered the well-groomed Shetland beneath the immemorial elms of his hereditary estate.

In a dingy London street, on a gloomy December day of the year 1608, there lay in a very unpretentious-looking house a little new-born baby. The floor around the cradle was strewn with rushes; the old woman who watched it wore a very homely dress; the room was low and narrow. Who would have thought, or even dreamed, that that little baby's name would one day be connected in men's minds with celestial pavements of sapphire and gold—with the warring of the cherubim—with the morning hymn of Creation? Who would have thought, or even dreamed, that a few lines penned in after-years by that little baby's hand would, in one of the most refined and enlightened ages of his country's history, cause as eager a contest between the highest intellects of the land as that which raged on the plains of Troy over the body of Patroclus! Surely, no such dream haunted the mind of the old nurse as she dozed over her pewter cup of ale and gin; or flitted before the fancy of the young mother as she fell asleep, lulled by the music of her infant's low breathing; or troubled the deep slumber of the hard-worked scrivener, the master of the house and the father of the boy. When little Johnny Milton began to toddle to the street-door, there to make his first observations upon life, his attention must have been very much attracted by the spread-eagle which was painted on the sign that swung over the entrance, according to the fashion of the time among tradesmen of all kinds. Perhaps the vast black form of the bird may have suggested to the child's mind his first notions of the illimitable plains of the air. Perhaps the creaking noise of the signboard may have seemed to his ears to contain mysterious utterances, such as those which little Paul Dombey heard in the murmurs of the waves. As the boy, put to bed early by his mother, lay in his crib, he must often have been awakened by a melodious sound stealing through the house. At first, perhaps, there would hover around his drowsy fancy thoughts of some fairy legend which his mother had told him; but when he became more fully awake, he would smile, and know that it was only his father playing chants or psalm-tunes on the virginals to a party of friends gathered about him—a frequent custom of an evening. The elder Milton was

possessed of considerable musical talent, and many of his compositions still float upon the waves of sacred harmonies that swell through our churches and chapels. Thus it came to pass that in after-life John Milton, notwithstanding his Puritan proclivities, loved "service high and anthem clear." Mrs. Milton was a woman of good sense, refinement, and virtue. We know little of her life, just as we know little of the soft shower that steals down at night; but as in the fresh beauty of the morning we recognize the fact that the vivifying drops have been there, so in her son's story, we find constant traces of her gentle influence. In those days, when books were scarce, a large stock of tales and ballads was quite an essential part of the education of a girl among the middle classes. Thus when she became a mother, she was able not only to dress and cook for her children, but also to amuse and open their minds as they sat around her through the summer noon or the winter twilight. In this way, under his mother's guidance, little Johnny no doubt took his first flight into the realms of fancy. Then there was the Bible, which had been so lately put into the hands of the people, and which, in its picturesque simplicity of detail is so calculated to attract and rivet the attention of a thoughtful child. What must have been the little fellow's delight when, on a Sunday afternoon, his mother opened the large Bible—the only one, probably, in that thrifty household, at a period when printing was still a comparatively expensive process—and he listened with wondering awe to the story of Samuel's call, or to the description of the heavenly Jerusalem! In truth we may say of Sarah Milton, that by her her son was taught "how to climb high above the sphery clime." The first person with whom the boy exchanged thoughts was his sister; throughout her whole life he retained a strong affection for her. Many must have been the sights which the children beheld together, and many the observations they made upon them. As they stood outside their own door in the twilight, they may have seen pass by a stately man, who trod the ground proudly, and who was wrapped in a mantle that partially hid his face but not the bold, reckless light of his eyes: his attendants following behind, three or four men with dark, sinister countenances. Their mother would tell them that this was the great Duke of Buckingham and his followers; and would add mentally to herself, with a face of concern, that the favourite had come into that quiet quarter of the city for no good. Next morning the worthy gentlewoman's righteous soul would be vexed by whispers which told of his Grace (or rather his gracelessness) having been seen holding communication that was more familiar than dignified with the pretty daughter of the jeweller in the next street; or she would be made to tremble by yet darker rumours, that spoke of the clash of rapiers heard at midnight in a neighbouring alley. When the brother and sister made an excursion to one of the larger thoroughfares, they may have beheld ride by on her palfrey a

midde-aged but still pretty, pale lady, with a few soberly-dressed attendants. With the quickness of childhood they would perceive that there was something singularly weary and dejected in her face, and even in the way she sat upon her horse. Johnny would take off his cap, and whisper to his sister to make a reverence, for this was the queen; and when the little girl refused to believe the fact on account of the cogent reasons, that kings and queens never went abroad without wearing a crown and looking the picture of supreme felicity, the boy would gravely retail for her benefit certain conversations which he had heard pass between their father and his friends, concerning the uneasy nature of affairs of State in general—little knowing in his innocent wisdom that poor Anne's troubles found a far richer soil in which to take root at her own fireside than in the politics of all Europe. Here, as they stood, would come a spruce gentleman, with quick, mincing steps, meeting another, cloak-enveloped, sallow-faced, and of long, slow strides; and the children would watch wonderingly the glances of mutual distrust they threw out in passing: their childish intellects not comprehending as yet that there was no love between the ambassadors of France and Spain. On some summer afternoon when their parents had taken them into the country to play among the fields, the children as they wandered about may have met an elderly woman who had a sweet, still, mournful face that looked as if a great grief were constantly hovering over her head and casting its shadow upon her, and who was dressed in widow's weeds. She may have stopped little Johnny, and wound one of his auburn curls around her finger, murmuring to herself that the child's hair was something the colour of *his*. The scrivener would not think that this caress from a commonplace woman could be any distinction to his boy, for the world did not know then that it was a million times greater honour to have been touched by the hand that had soothed the last earthly suffering of William Shakspeare—his wife, Anne's—than to have been clasped by that of the mightiest princess that ever wore mortal crown. The meeting was very possible: for though Anne Shakspeare resided at Stratford-on-Avon, we do not know that she did not visit London.

In this brief record nothing more can be said of John Milton's father, to whom he doubtless owed that sterling good principle which always characterized his actions. But the fact may be stated that by means of earnest hard work and regular habits he managed to save enough money to purchase a small estate at Colebrooke, in Buckinghamshire, whither he retired for the last years of his life. There his son John often visited him, and there in his country walks young Milton may have inhaled a perfume which induced him to use that much-criticized expression concerning "the thymy wood."

The author of this paper lives in a primitive corner of the world that is perhaps more like the England of Milton's day than any other

district in the land. After a storm of rain, in wandering through the thick belts of wood that skirt the hills, the fragrance which comes wafted along from the neighbouring banks, all draped with thyme and other aromatic herbs, is exactly such as to make that expression most apt and true to nature.

Biography always reminds us of one of those moving panoramas which are constantly offering fresh pictures to the eye of the spectator. Let us suppose that the life of Milton has been represented on a long strip of canvas, and then imagine that we gaze at the earliest scenes displayed there when the canvas is unrolled. The first picture shows a boy of about twelve years old, with auburn hair, clear brown eyes, a bright complexion, and a small, almost girlish mouth. He is sitting at a table, and seems engaged in putting some passages of English poetry (perhaps some lines from the "Fairy Queen") into Latin verse. His forehead is slightly contracted, as though he were resolved to be very earnest about his work; but he is glancing a little wistfully towards the volume of poetry at his side. Opposite sits a man who is dressed as a clergyman, and has a gentle, intellectual face; he has looked up from the large folio open before him, to smile encouragingly at the boy—sympathizing, no doubt, with those longing glances at the volume of poetry; for his face is not that of a narrow-minded pedant who thinks Greek and Latin the only languages in which the rarest gems of literature can be set. These are John Milton and his tutor Young. The second change in the canvas represents a huge and to our modern eyes very clumsily made stage-waggon, which is toiling up a hill, beneath a burning summer sun. It is drawn by six strongly-built horses, whose sleek coats, well-filled-out quarters, and clean legs prove them to be not ill cared for; and who are covered with a profusion of shining brass and leather. With his whip shifted into his left hand, and his right resting lovingly on the mane of the near leader, walks the waggoner—a hale, middle-aged man with a shrewd, honest face. The contents of the waggon are most varied. There are large packets of books, immense piles of boxes, lumbering pieces of furniture; and amidst these things women and children sit perched about in different attitudes. A little way in front of the waggon walks a youth, in whom, though his face has grown somewhat more manly, we recognize the boy of the last picture. This is John Milton, travelling from London to Cambridge, with Hobson, the prince of waggoners; who, when the plague was in Cambridge, and no communication was allowed between that town and the metropolis, is said to have died, not of the disease, but of griefs because his usual journeys were suspended. The third scene displays a set of college rooms, characterized by all that glorious untidiness, and that evident propensity for using every article of furniture for a purpose opposite to the one it was intended to serve, which ordinarily distinguish such apartments at the present day. There

are only wanting those new innovations, the luxuriously easy smoking-chair, the prints of the Derby winners, and the portrait of the reigning *Prima Donna*. At a table by the open window sit two youths with bottles and glasses between them. One, in whom we know again him that was walking before the stage waggon, is sipping his wine with rather an abstracted air, as if he did not care for it; but the other, who has a dark, Southern cast of countenance, is holding his glass up to the light, and looking at it with a joyous twinkle in his bright black eyes that proclaims the genuine connoisseur. This is Charles Diodate, Milton's most intimate college-friend, who was the son of Italian Protestant parents residing in England. In the fourth picture we find three ladies—one aged, one in her prime, and one little more than a child. Look well at these three women; for, reckoning from the time when that old lady was a child to the time when that child shall herself be old, they form a golden chain of female loveliness and excellence, stretching through the most stirring periods of our history. Those eyes that are now growing dim with the shades of life's evening, beheld, when the dawn of beauty was flashing in them, the highflown stately gallantry that signalized the Court of Elizabeth. That cheek, which is now bright with the sweet rosebud of youth, shall, when it is withered, glow with indignant modesty at the licentious, godless riot that will reign at the Court of Charles the Second. The two elder ladies are looking on, with approving smiles on their lips, while a very young man—in whom we once more find the boy and the youth of the former pictures—is occupied with the girl. He is apparently teaching her to recite something, for he waves his hand, and she is imitating the movement, and gazing up into his eyes with all a child's trustful familiarity in hers. This is the Lady Alice Egerton, whom Milton is instructing in her part as The Lady in "Comus," and to whose brothers he was for some time tutor. The other two women are her mother, the Countess of Bridgewater, and her grandmother. We should like to go on with the panorama, but it does not come within our province to do so in this paper.

Such is a brief sketch of the youth of him whom the discovery of the much-disputed epitaph has lately brought so prominently into the public mind. With regard to that epitaph, we can only say that the first time we listened to it, the ear gave its opinion that it was by Milton. There is something in the cadence of the lines (although the metre is so different) that reminds us of "Lycidas"; besides, there are one or two epithets, such as that of "amber-dropping," which are used in Milton's other poems; and we all know how often writers repeat the same ideas and expressions. Might not this epitaph have been a production of Milton's youth—one which he himself did not think much of, but which in after-life he copied out to please some friend? This is suggested with all deference to more experienced critics. One

thing, however, we must protest against, and that is the hideous and ridiculous caricature of it which appeared in the papers. Whether it was or was not written by Milton, it is, at least, a pretty, pathetic little poem of that long-past time, two hundred years ago. A fancy came over us on some of these recent brilliant summer nights of trying to raise the spirit of the great poet himself to settle the controversy; but since seeing that terrible caricature, we have feared to find the ghost in too indignant a state for conjuration. Had the incantations been proceeded with however, and been successful, the august and gracious spirit might have been slow to give a decision: since he would see on one side a man who, with the melody of deep simple feeling, and the graphic picturesqueness of vivid fancy, is bringing the story of Milton's life home to every fire-side; and, on the other, he would behold one who, with all the energies of his strong, luminous intellect, his earnest soul, and his warm, true heart, is labouring to guide the youth of England in the path of enlightened knowledge and pure religion, which the feet of young Milton trod long ago, and which led him to two glorious immortalities.

ALICE KING.



SONNET.

A LOVER TO HIS MISTRESS'S JEWELS.

FLASH, happy gems, and hide from prying glance
The rounded forms you clasp, but cannot grace:
Your frigid glitter serves but to enhance
The myriad charms that sparkle from her face:
Ye cannot ape the lustre of her eyes,
Nor price the smile that dimples round her mouth:
Your changeless gleam is sharp as frosty skies,
She, sweet as roses from the rose-strewn south:
The drooping pearl which nestles at her ear
Pales at the maiden fairness of her throat,
While happier diamonds, pure and crystal-clear,
Reflect the beauties they have learnt by rote:
Yet doth her touch restore your gemmed array
Tenfold the worth her beauty takes away.

STONE LEIGH.

MAJOR PARRIFER.

HE was one of the worst magistrates that ever sat upon the bench of justices. Strangers were given to wonder how he got his commission. But, you see, men are fit or unfit for a post according to their doings in it ; and, generally speaking, people cannot tell what the doings will be beforehand.

They called him Major : Major Parrifer : but he only held rank in a militia regiment, and everybody knows what that is. He had bought the place he lived in some years before, and christened it Parrifer Hall. The worst title he could have hit upon ; seeing that the good old Hall, with a good old family in it, was only a mile or two distant.

They lived away ; money was not lacking ; the Major, his wife, six daughters, and a son, who did not come home much. Mrs. Parrifer was stuck-up : it is one of our county sayings, and it applied to her well. When she called on people her silk gowns rustled as if buckram lined them ; her voice was loud, her manner patronizing ; the Major's voice and manner were the same ; and the girls took after them.

At the corner of the road, joining Major Parrifer's fence, was a cottage that belonged to me. To me, Johnny Ludlow. Not that I had control yet awhile over that, or any other cottage I might possess. George Reed rented the cottage : it stood in a good large garden ; a high hedge running along the side of it up Piefinch Lane, but only a low hedge in front, with a low gate in the middle. Well-kept trim hedges : George Reed took care of that.

There was quite a history attaching to him. His father had been indoor servant at the Court ; when he married and left it, my grandfather gave him a lease of this cottage, renewable every seven years. George was the only son, had been very decently educated, but wild when he grew up and got out of everything ; by which means he was only a day-labourer ; steady now, but never likely to be anything else. He took to the cottage after old Reed's death, and worked for Mr. Sterling who had the Court now. George Reed was civil in ordinary, but uncommonly independent. His first wife had died, leaving a daughter, Cathy ; later he married again. Reed's wild oats had been sown years ago ; he was thoroughly well-conducted and industrious now, working in his own garden early and late.

When Cathy's mother died, she was taken to by an aunt, who lived near Worcester. At fifteen she came home again, for the aunt had died. Her ten years' training there had done very little for her, except make her into a pretty girl. Cathy had been trained to idleness, but

to very little else. She could sing; self-taught of course; she could embroider handkerchiefs and frills and petticoat-tails; she could write a tolerable letter without many mistakes, and was great at reading, especially when the literature was of the halfpenny kind issued weekly. The acquirements (except the last) were not bad things in themselves, but entirely unsuited to Cathy Reed's condition and her future prospects in life. The best that she could aspire to be, the best her father expected for her, was that of entering on a light respectable service, and later to become, perhaps, a labourer's wife.

The second Mrs. Reed, a quiet kind of young woman, had one little girl only when Cathy came home. She was nearly struck dumb when she found what had been Cathy's acquirements in the way of usefulness; or rather what were her non-acquirements: the facts unfolding themselves by degrees.

"Your father thinks he'd like you to get a service with some of the gentlefolks, Cathy," her stepmother said to her. "Perhaps at the Court, if they could make room for you; or over at Squire Todhetley's. Meanwhile you'll help me with the work at home for a few weeks first; won't you, dear? When another little one comes, there'll be a good deal on my hands."

"Oh, I'll help," answered Cathy, who was a good-natured, ready-speaking girl.

"That's right. Can you wash?"

"No," said Cathy, with a very decisive shake of the head.

"Not wash! Can you iron?"

"Pocket-handkerchiefs."

"Your aunt was a seamstress: can you sew well?"

"I don't like sewing."

Mrs. Reed looked at her, but said no more then, rather leaving it to practice instead of theory to develop Cathy's capabilities. But when she came to put her to the test, she found Cathy could not, or would not, do any kind of useful work whatever. Cathy could not wash, or iron, or scour, or cook, or sweep; or even sew coarse plain things, such as are required in labourers' families. Cathy could do several kinds of fancy work: Cathy could idle away her time at the glass, oiling her hair, and dressing herself to the best advantage; Cathy had a smattering of history and geography and chronology; and of polite literature, as comprised in the pages of the aforesaid halfpenny and penny weekly romances. The aunt had sent Cathy to a cheap day-school where such learning was supposed to be taught: had let her run about when she ought to have been cooking and washing; and of course Cathy had acquired a distaste for work. Mrs. Reed sat down aghast, her hands falling helpless on her lap, and a kind of fear at what might be Cathy's future stealing into her heart.

"Child, what is to become of you?"

Cathy had no qualms upon the point herself. She gave a laughing kiss to the little child, toddling round the room by the chairs, and took out of her pocket one of those halfpenny serials, whose enthrilling stories of brigands and captive damsels she had learnt to take her chief delight in.

"I shall have to teach her everything," sighed disappointed Mrs. Reed. "Catherine, I don't think the kind of useless things your aunt has let you learn are good for poor folk like us."

Good! Mrs. Reed might have gone a little farther. She began her instruction, but Cathy would not learn. Cathy was good-humoured always; but of work she would do none. If she attempted it, Mrs. Reed had to do it over again.

"Where on earth will the gentlefolks get their servants from, if the girls are to be like you?" cried honest Mrs. Reed.

Well, time went on; a year or two. Cathy Reed tried two or three services, but did not keep them. Young Mrs. Sterling at the Court at length took her. In three months Cathy was back home as usual. "I do not think Catherine will be kept anywhere," Mrs. Sterling said to her step-mother, "When she ought to have been minding the baby, the nurse would find her with a strip of embroidery in her hand, or else buried in the pages of some bad story that can only do her harm."

Cathy was turned seventeen when the warfare set in between her father and Major Parrifer. The Major suddenly cast his eyes on the little cottage outside his own land and coveted it. Before this, young Parrifer (a harmless young man, with no whiskers and sandy hair parted down the middle) had struck up an acquaintance with Cathy. When he was at home from Oxford (where he got plucked twice, and at length took his name off the books) he would often be seen leaning over the cottage-gate talking to Cathy in the garden, with her two little half-sisters that she pretended to mind. There was no harm: but perhaps Major Parrifer feared it might grow into it; and he badly wanted the plot of ground to be his, that he might pull the cottage down and extend his own boundaries to Piefinch Lane.

One fine day in the holidays when Tod and I were indoors making flies for fishing, old Thomas appeared, and said that George Reed had come over and wanted to speak to me. Which set us wondering. What could he want with me?

"Show him in here," said Tod.

Reed came in: a tall and powerful man of forty; with dark, curling hair, and a determined, good-looking face. He began saying that he had heard Major Parrifer was after his cottage, wanting to buy it; so he had come over to beg me to interfere and stop the sale.

"Why, Reed, what can I do?" I asked. "You know I have no power."

"You'd not turn me out of it yourself, I know, sir."

"That I'd not."

Neither would I. I liked George Reed. And I remembered that he used to have me in his arms sometimes when I was a little fellow at the Court. Once he carried me to my mother's grave in the churchyard, and told me she had gone to live in heaven.

"When a rich gentleman sets his mind on a poor man's bit of a cottage, and says, 'That shall be mine,' the poor man has not got much chance against him, sir, unless he that owns the cottage will be his friend. I know you've got no power at present, Master Johnny; but if you'd speak to Mr. Brandon, perhaps he'd listen to you."

"Sit down, Reed," interrupted Tod, putting his catgut out of hand. "I thought you had the cottage on a lease."

"And so I have, sir. But the lease will be out at Michaelmas next, and Mr. Brandon can turn me from it if he likes. My father and mother died there, sir; my wife died there; my children were born there; and the place is as much like my homestead as if it was mine."

"How do you know old Parrifer wants it?" continued Tod.

"I've heard it from a sure source. I've heard, too, that his lawyer and Mr. Brandon's lawyer have settled the matter between their two selves, and don't intend to let me as much as know I'm to go out till the time has a'most come, for fear I should make a row over it. Nobody upon earth can stop it except Mr. Brandon," added Reed with energy.

"Have you spoken to Mr. Brandon, Reed?"

"No, sir. I was going up to him; but the thought took me that I'd better come off at once to Master Ludlow; his word might be of more avail than mine. There's no time to be lost. If once the lawyers get Mr. Brandon's consent, he mayn't be able to recal it."

"What does Parrifer want with the cottage?"

"I fancy he covets the bit of garden, sir; he sees the good order I've brought it into. If it's not that, I don't know what it can be. The cottage can be no eyesore to him; he can't see it from his windows."

"Shall I go with you, Johnny?" said Tod, as Reed went home, after drinking the ale old Thomas gave him. "We'll circumvent that Parrifer if there's law or justice in the Brandon land."

We went off to Mr. Brandon's in the pony-carriage, Tod driving. He lived near Alcester, and had the management of my property while I was a minor. As we went along who should ride past but Major Parrifer.

"Looking like the bull-dog that he is," cried Tod, who could not bear the man. "Johnny, what will you lay that he has been to Mr. Brandon's? The negotiations are becoming intricate."

Tod did not go in. On second thought, he said, it might be better to leave it to me. The Squire must try, if I failed. Mr. Brandon was at home; and Tod drove on into Alcester by way of passing the time.

"But I don't think you can see him," said the housekeeper when she came to me. "This is one of his bad days. A gentleman called just now, and I went in to the master, but it was of no use."

"I know; it was Major Parrifer. We thought he might have been calling here."

Mr. Brandon was little and thin, with a shrivelled face. He lived alone, except for three or four servants; and always fancied himself ill with one ailment or another. When I went in, for he said he'd see me, he was sitting in an easy chair with a geranium-coloured Turkish cap on his head, and two bottles of medicine at his elbow.

"Well, Johnny, an invalid as usual, you see. And what is it you so particularly want?"

"I want to ask you a favour, Mr. Brandon, if you'll please to grant it me."

"What is it?"

"You know that cottage, sir, at the corner of Piefinch Lane. George Reed's."

"Well?"

"I am come to ask you to please not to let it be sold."

"Who wants to sell it?"

"Major Parrifer wants to buy it; and to turn out Reed. The lawyers are going to arrange it."

Mr. Brandon pushed the Turkish cap up on his brow and gave the purple tassel over his ear a twirl as he looked at me. People thought him incapable; but it was only because he had no work to do that he seemed so. He would get a bit irritable sometimes, and he had a squeaky voice, but he was a good and just man.

"How did you hear this, Johnny?"

I told him all about it. What Reed had said, and our having met the Major on horseback as we drove along.

"He came here, but I didn't feel well enough to see him," said Mr. Brandon. "Johnny, you know that I stand in place of your father as regards your property; to do the best I can with it."

"Yes, sir. And I am sure you do it."

"If Major Parrifer—I don't like the man," broke off Mr. Brandon, "but that's neither here nor there. At the last magistrates' meeting I attended he was so overbearing as to shut us all up. My nerves were unstrung for four-and-twenty hours afterwards."

"And Squire Todhetley came home swearing," I could not help putting in.

"Ah," said Mr. Brandon. "Yes; some people can throw bile off that way. I can't. But, Johnny, all that goes for nothing in regard to the matter in hand: and I was about to point out to you that if Major Parrifer has set his mind upon buying Reed's cottage and the bit of land attached to it, he is no doubt prepared to offer a full price;

more, probably, than it is worth. If so, I should not, in your interest, be justified in refusing this."

I could feel my face flush with the sense of injustice, and the tears come into my eyes. They called me a muff for many things, and this was one.

"I'd not touch the money myself, sir. And if you used it for me, I'm sure it would never bring any good."

"What's that, Johnny?"

"Money got by oppression or injustice never does. There was a fellow at school——"

"Never mind the fellow at school. Go on with your own arguments."

"To turn Reed out of the place where he has always lived, out of the garden he has done so well by, just because a rich man wants to get it into his possession, would be awfully unjust, sir. It would be as bad as the story we heard read in church last Sunday for the First Lesson, of Naboth's vineyard. Tod said so as we came along."

"Who's Tod?"

"Joseph Todhetley. If you turned Reed out, sir, for the sake of benefiting me, I should be ashamed to look people in the face when they talked of it. If you please, sir, I do not think my father would allow it if he were alive. Reed says the place is like his homestead."

Mr. Brandon measured two tablespoonfuls of medicine into a glass, drank it, and ate a French plum afterwards. The plums were in a paper, and he handed them to me. I ate one, and tried to crack the stone.

"You have taken up a strong opinion upon this matter, Master Johnny."

"Yes, sir. I like Reed. And if I did not, he has no more right to be turned out of his home than Major Parrifer has out of his. How would *he* like it, if some great rich, powerful man came down on his place and turned him out?"

"Major Parrifer can't be turned out, Johnny; it is his own."

"And Reed's place is mine, sir—if you'll not be angry with me for saying it. Please don't let it be done, Mr. Brandon."

The pony-carriage came rattling up at this juncture, and we saw Tod look at the windows impatiently. I got up, and Mr. Brandon shook hands with me.

"What you have said is all very good, Johnny, right in principle; but I cannot let it entirely outweigh your interest. When this proposal shall be put before me—as you say it will be—it must have my full consideration."

I stopped when I got to the door and looked at him. If he would but have given me an assurance! And he read in my face what I wanted.

"No, Johnny, I can't do that. You may go home easy for the present, however; for I will promise not to accept the offer to purchase without first seeing you again and showing you my reasons."

"I may have gone back to school, sir."

"I tell you I'll see you again if I decide to accept the offer," he repeated emphatically. And I went out to the pony-chaise.

"Old Brandon means to sell," said Tod when I told him. And he gave the pony an angry cut, that made him fly off with a leap.

Will anybody believe that I never heard another word upon the subject?—except what people said in the way of gossip. It was soon known that Mr. Brandon had declined to sell the cottage; and when his lawyer wrote him word the price of the offer for it was increased to quite an unprecedented amount, considering the small value of the cottage and garden in question, Mr. Brandon only sent a peremptory note back again, saying he was not in the habit of changing his decisions, and the place *was not for sale*. Tod threw up his hat.

"Bravo, old Brandon! I thought he'd not go quite over to the enemy."

I was leaning over George Reed's gate in the sunset of the August evening. In passing it on my way home from the Sterlings, he saw me and came running to it.

"I have to thank you for this, sir. They be going to renew my lease."

"Are they? All right. But you need not thank me; I know nothing about it."

George Reed gave a sort of decisive nod. "If you had not got the ear of Mr. Brandon, sir, I know what box I'd have been in now. Look at them girls!"

It was not a very complimentary mode of speech, as applied to the Misses Parrifer. Three of them were passing, dressed outrageously in the fashion as usual. I lifted my straw-hat, and one of them nodded in return, but the other two only looked out at the tail of their eyes.

"The Major has been trying it on with me now," remarked Reed, watching them out of sight. "When he found he could not buy the place, he thought he'd try and buy out me. He wanted the bit of land for a kitchen-garden, he said; and he'd give me a bank-note of five pounds to go out of it. Much obliged, Major, I said, but I'd not go for fifty."

"As if he had not got heaps of land himself to make kitchen-gardens of!"

"But don't you see, sir, to a man like Major Parrifer, who thinks the world was made for him, there's nothing so mortifying as being balked. He set his mind upon this place; he can't get it; and he is just boiling over. He'd poison me if he could. Now then, what's wanted?"

Cathy had come up, with her pretty dark eyes, whispering some

question to her father. I ran on; it was getting late, and the Manor more than two miles off.

From that time the feud grew between Major Parrifer and George Reed. Not openly; not actively. There could not well be either when the relative positions in life were so different. Major Parrifer was a wealthy proprietor, a county magistrate (and an awfully overbearing one), and George Reed a poor cottager who worked for his bread as a day-labourer. But that the Major grew to abhor and hate Reed; that the man, inhabiting the place at his very gates in spite of him, and looking at him independently, as if to say he knew it, every time he passed, had become an eyesore, was easy to be seen.

The Major resented it on us all. He was rude to Mr. Brandon when they met; he struck out his whip once when he was on horseback, and I passed him, as if he would like to strike me. I don't know whether he was aware of my visit to Mr. Brandon; but the cottage was mine, I was friendly with Reed, and that was enough. Months, however, went on, and nothing came of it.

One Sunday morning in winter, when the bells were going for service, Major Parrifer's carriage turned out with the ladies all in full fig. The Major himself turned out after it, walking, one of his daughters with him, a young man on a visit there, and a couple of servants. As they passed George Reed's, the sound of work being done in the garden caught the Major's quick ears. He turned softly down Piefinch Lane, stole to the high hedge on tiptoe, and stooped to peep through it.

Reed was doing something to his turnips, hoeing them, the Major said. He called the gentleman to him and the two servants, and bade them look through the hedge. Nothing more. The party went on to church then.

On Tuesday, the Major rode out to take his place on the magisterial bench. It was bitterly cold January weather, and only one magistrate besides himself was on it: *a clergyman*. Two or three petty offenders were brought before him, who were severely sentenced—as prisoners always were when Major Parrifer was the presiding judge. Another magistrate came in afterwards.

Singular to say, Tod and I had gone to the town that day about a new saddle for his horse; singular on account of what happened. In saying we were there I am telling the truth; it is not an invented fiction to give colour to the tale. Upon turning out of the saddler's, which is near the justice-room, old Jones was coming along with a handcuffed prisoner, and a tail after them.

"Halloa!" cried Tod. "Here's fun!"

But I had seen what Tod did not, and rubbed my eyes, wondering if they saw double.

"*Tod!* It is George Reed!"

His face was as white as a sheet, and he walked along, not to say

unwillingly, but as one in a state of sad shame, of awful rage. Tod made only one bound to the prisoner; and old Jones, knowing us, did not push him back again.

"As I'm a living man, I do not know what this is for, or why I am paraded through the town in disgrace," spoke Reed, in answer to Tod's question. "If I'm charged with doing wrong, I'm willing to appear and answer for it, without being made into a felon in the face and eyes of folks, beforehand."

"Why do you bring Reed up in this manner—with the handcuffs on?" demanded Tod of the constable.

"Because the Major told me to, young Mr. Todhetley."

Be you very sure Tod pushed after them into the justice-room: the police saw him, but he was a magistrate's son. The crowd would have liked to push in also, but were ignominiously sent to the right-about. I waited, and was presently admitted surreptitiously. Reed was standing before Major Parrifer and the other two, handcuffed still; and I gathered what the charge was.

It was preferred by Major Parrifer, who had his servants there and a gentleman as witnesses: George Reed had been working in his garden on the previous Sunday morning—which was against the law. Old Jones had gone to Mr. Sterling's and taken him on the Major's warrant, as he was thrashing corn.

Reed's answer was to the following effect. He was *not* working. His wife was ill—her little boy being but four days old—and Mr. Duffham ordered her some mutton broth. He went to the garden to get the turnips up to put in it. It was only along of her illness that he didn't go to church himself, he and Cathy. Ask Mr. Duffham.

"Do you dare to tell me you were not hoeing turnips?" cried Major Parrifer.

"I dare to say I was not doing it as work," independently answered the man. "If you looked at me, as you say, through the hedge, you must have seen the bunch of turnips I had got up, lying near. I took the hoe in my hand, and I did use it for two or three minutes. Some dead weeds had got thrown along the bed, by the children, perhaps, and I pulled them away. I went indoors directly: before the clock struck eleven the turnips was on, boiling with the scrag of mutton: I peeled them and put them in myself."

"I see the bunch of turnips," cried one of the servants. "They was lying——"

"Hold your tongue, sir," roared his master; "if your further evidence is wanted, you'll be asked for it. As to this defence"—and the Major turned to his brother magistrates with a scornful smile—"it is quite ingenious; one of the clever ones we usually get here. But it will not serve your turn, George Reed. When the sanctity of the Sabbath is violated——"

"Reed's not a man to say he did not a do a thing if he did," interrupted Tod.

The Major glared at him for an instant, and then put out of hand a big gold pencil he was waving majestically.

"Clear the room of spectators," said he to the policemen.

Which was all Tod got for interfering. We had to go out: and in a minute or two Reed came out also, handcuffed as before; not in charge of old Jones, but of the county police. He had been sentenced to a month's imprisonment. Major Parrifer had wanted to make it three months; he said something about six; but the other two thought there were slightly extenuating circumstances in the case. A solicitor who was intimate with the Sterlings, and knew Reed very well, had been present towards the end.

"Could you not have spoken in my defence, sir?" asked Reed, as he passed him in coming out.

"I would had I been able. But you see, my man, when the law gets broken——"

"The devil take the law," said Reed savagely. "What I want is justice."

"And the administrators of it are determined to uphold it, what can be said?" went on the solicitor equably, as if there had been no interruption.

"You would make out that I broke the law, just doing what I did: and I swear it was no more: that I can be legally punished for it?"

"Don't, Reed; it's of no use. The Major and his witnesses swore you were at work. And it appears you were."

"I asked them to take a fine—if I must be punished. I might have found friends to advance it for me."

"Just so. And for that reason of course they did not take it," said the candid lawyer.

"What is my wife to do while I'm in prison? And the children? I may come out to find them starved. A month's long enough for it this weather."

Reed was allowed time for no more. He'd not have been allowed that, but for having been jammed by the crowd at the doorway. He caught my eye as they were getting clear.

"Master Johnny, will you go to the Court for me—your own place, sir—and tell the master that I swear I am innocent? Perhaps he'll let a few shillings go to the wife weekly; tell him with my duty that I'll work it out as soon as I'm released. All this is done out of revenge, sir, because Major Parrifer couldn't get me away from my cottage. May the Lord repay him!"

It caused a commotion, I can tell you, this imprisonment of Reed; the place was ringing with it between the Court and Dyke Manor. Our two houses seemed to have more to do with it than other people's; first

because Reed worked at the Court; secondly, because I, who owned both the Court and the cottage, lived at the Manor. People took it up pretty warmly, and Mrs. Reed and the children were cared for. Mr. Sterling paid her five shillings a week; and Mr. Brandon and the Squire helped her on the quiet, and there were others. In small country localities gentlemen don't like to say openly their neighbours are in the wrong: at any rate, they rarely *do* anything by way of remedy. Some spoke of an appeal to the Secretary of State, but it came to nothing, and no steps were taken to liberate Reed. Bill Whitney, who was staying a week with us, wrote and told his mother about it; she sent back a sovereign for Mrs. Reed; we three took it to her, and went about saying old Parrifer ought to be kicked, which was a relief to our feelings.

But there's something to tell about Cathy. On the day that Reed was taken up, it was not known at his home immediately. The neighbours, aware that the wife was ill—for old Duffham thought she was going to have a fever, and said she must be kept quiet—said nothing. For one thing, they did not know what there was to tell; except that Reed had been marched off from his work in handcuffs by Jones the constable. In the evening, when news came of his committal, it was agreed that an excuse should be made to Mrs. Reed that her husband had gone out on a business job for his master, and that Cathy—who could not fail to hear the truth from one or another—should be warned not to say anything.

"Tell Cathy to come out here," said the women, looking over the gate. It was the little girl they spoke to; who could talk well: and she answered that Cathy was not there. So Ann Perkins, Mrs. Reed's sister, was called out.

"Where's Cathy?" cried they.

Ann Perkins answered in a passion—that she did not know where Cathy was, but should uncommonly like to know, and she only wished she was behind her—keeping her there with her sister when she ought to be at her own home! Then the women told Ann Perkins what they had been intending to tell Cathy, and looked out for the latter.

She did not come back. The night passed and the next day passed, and Cathy was not seen or heard of. The only person who appeared to have met her was Mother Picker. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, and Cathy had her best bonnet on. Mother Picker remarked upon her looking so smart, and asked where she was going to. Cathy answered that her uncle (who lived at Evesham) had sent to say she must go over there at once. "But when she came to the two roads, she turned off quite on the contrary way to Evesham, and I thought the young woman must be daft," concluded Mrs. Picker.

The month passed away, and Reed came out; but Cathy had not returned. He got home on foot, in the afternoon; with his hair cut close, and seemed as quiet as a lamb. The man had been daunted.

It was an awful insult to put upon him ; a slur on his good name for life ; and some of them said George Reed would never hold up his head again. Had he been cruel or vindictive, he might have revenged himself on Major Parrifer personally, in a manner the Major would have found it difficult to forget.

The wife was about again, but sickly : the little ones did not at first know their father. One of the first questions he asked was after Cathy. The girl was not at hand to welcome him, and he took it in the light of a reproach. When men come for the first time out of jail, they are sensitive.

"Mr. Sterling called in yesterday, George, to say you were to go to your work again as soon as ever you came home," said the wife, evading the question about Cathy. "Everybody has been so kind ; they know you didn't deserve what you got."

"Ah," said Reed carelessly. "Where's Cathy?"

Mrs. Reed felt herself obliged to tell. No diplomatist, she brought out the news abruptly : Cathy had not been seen or heard of since the afternoon he was sent to prison. That aroused Reed : nothing else seemed to have done it : and he got up from his chair.

"Why, where is she? What's become of her?"

The neighbours had been indulging in sundry speculations on the same question, which they had obligingly favoured Mrs. Reed with ; but she did not think it necessary to impart them to her husband.

"Cathy was a good girl on the whole, George ; putting aside that she'd do no work and spent her time reading good-for-nothing books. What I think is this—that she heard of your misfortune and wouldn't come home to face it. She's close upon eighteen now, you know."

"Come home from where?"

Mrs. Reed had to tell the whole truth. That Cathy, dressed up in her best things, had left home without any of them seeing her ; she had been met in the road by Mrs. Picker, and told her what has already been said. But the uncle at Evesham had seen nothing of her.

Forgetting his shorn hair—as he would have to forget it, or, at least, to ignore it until it should grow again—George Reed went tramping off there and then the more than two miles of way to Mother Picker's. She could not tell him much more than he already knew : "Cathy was all in her best, her curls 'iled, and her pink ribbins as fresh as her cheeks, and said in answer to questions that she had been sent for sudden to her uncle's at Evesham : but she had turned off quite the conteraury road." Mrs. Picker particularly enlarged upon the "iled curls." From thence he walked on to his brother's at Evesham ; and learnt that Cathy had not been sent for, and had not come.

When Reed got home, he was dead-beat. How many miles the man had walked that bleak February day, he did not stay to think : perhaps thirty. When excitement buoys up the spirit the body does not feel

fatigue. Mrs. Reed put supper before her husband, and he eat a bit mechanically, lost in thought.

"It fairly 'mazes me," she said, presently, 'in the local phraseology. "But for going out in her best things, I should think some bad accident had come to her. There's ponds about, and young girls might slip in unawares. But the putting on her best things shows she was going somewhere."

"She put 'em on, and went off without letting none of us see her," answered Mrs. Reed, snuffing the candle. "I should have thought she'd maybe gone off to some wake—only there wasn't one agate within range."

"Cathy had no bad acquaintance to lead her astray," he resumed. "The girls about here are decent, and mind their work."

"Which Cathy didn't," thought Mrs. Reed. "Cathy held her head above 'em," she said, aloud. "She didn't seem to make acquaintance with nobody but that young Parrifer. She'd talk to him by the hour together, and I couldn't get her indoors."

Reed lifted his head. "Young Parrifer!—what—*his* son?" turning his thumb in the direction of Parrifer Hall. "Cathy talked to him!"

"By the hour together," repeated Mrs. Reed. "He'd be on that side the gate, a-talking and laughing and leaning on it; and Cathy, she'd be in the path by the tall hollyhocks, talking back to him, and fondling the children."

Reed rose up, a strange look on his face. "How long was that going on?"

"Ever so long; I can't remember just," responded Mrs. Reed. "But young Parrifer is only at the Hall by fits and starts."

"And you never told me, woman!"

"I thought no harm of it. I don't think harm of it now," emphatically added Mrs. Reed. "The worst of young Parrifer that I've seen is that he's as soft as a tomtit."

Reed put on his hat without another word, and walked out. Late as it was, he was going to the Hall. He rang a peal at it, more like a lord than a labourer just let out of prison. There was some delay in opening the door—the household had gone upstairs, but a man came at last.

"I want to see Major Parrifer."

The words were so authoritative; the man's appearance so strange, with his burly frame and his clipped hair, as he pushed forward into the hall, that the servant momentarily lost his wits. A light in a room on the left guided Reed; he entered it, and found himself face to face with Major Parrifer, who was seated in an easy chair before a good fire, spirits on the table, and a cigar in his mouth. What with the curling smoke from that, what with the faint light—for all the candles had been put out but one—the Major did not at first sight distinguish who

his late guest might be. When the bare head and the resolute eyes met his, he certainly paled a little, and the cigar fell on the carpet.

"I want my daughter, Major Parrifer."

To hear a demand made for a daughter when the Major had possibly been thinking the demand might be his life, was undoubtedly a relief, and brought back his courage.

"What do you mean, fellow?" he growled, stamping out the fire of the cigar. "Are you out of your mind?"

"Not quite. You might have driven some out of theirs, though, by what you've done. *We'll let that part be*, Major. I've come to-night about my daughter—where is she?"

They stood looking at each other. Reed stood just inside the door, his hat in his hand; he did not forget his good manners even in the presence of his enemy; they were a habit with him. The Major stared at him: he really knew nothing whatever of the matter, not even that the girl was missing; and he did think Reed's imprisonment must have turned his brain. Perhaps Reed saw that he was not understood.

"I come home from the prison, into which you put me, to find my daughter Catherine gone. She went away the day I was taken up. Where she went, or what she's doing, heaven knows; but you or yours are answerable for it, whichever way it may be."

"You have been drinking," said Major Parrifer.

"*You* have, maybe," returned Reed, glancing at the spirits. "Either Cathy went out on a harmless jaunt, and is staying away because she can't face the shame at home which you have put there; or else she went out to meet your son, and has been taken away by him. I think it must be the last; my fears tell it me; and, if so, you can't be off knowing something of it. Major Parrifer, I must have my daughter."

Whether the hint given about his son alarmed the Major, causing him to forget his bluster for once and answer civilly, he certainly did it. His son was in Ireland with his regiment, he said; had not been at the Hall for weeks and weeks: he could answer for it that Lieutenant Parrifer knew nothing of the girl.

"He was here at Christmas. I saw him."

"And left two or three days after it. How dare you, fellow, charge him with such a thing? He'd wring your neck for you if he were here."

"Perhaps I might wring his first. Major Parrifer, I want my daughter."

"If you do not get out of my house, I'll have you brought before me to-morrow for trespassing, and give you a second month's imprisonment," roared the Major, gathering bluster and courage. "You want another month of it: this one does not appear to have done you the good it ought. Now—go!"

"I'll go," said Reed, who began to see the Major really did not

fatigue. Mrs. Reed put supper before her husband, and he eat a bit mechanically, lost in thought.

"It fairly 'mazes me," he said, presently, 'in the local phraseology. "But for going out in her best things, I should think some bad accident had come to her. There's ponds about, and young girls might slip in unawares. But the putting on her best things shows she was going somewhere."

"She put 'em on, and went off without letting none of us see her," answered Mrs. Reed, snuffing the candle. "I should have thought she'd maybe gone off to some wake—only there wasn't one agate within range."

"Cathy had no bad acquaintance to lead her astray," he resumed. "The girls about here are decent, and mind their work."

"Which Cathy didn't," thought Mrs. Reed. "Cathy held her head above 'em," she said, aloud. "She didn't seem to make acquaintance with nobody but that young Parrifer. She'd talk to him by the hour together, and I couldn't get her indoors."

Reed lifted his head. "Young Parrifer!—what—*his* son?" turning his thumb in the direction of Parrifer Hall. "Cathy talked to him!"

"By the hour together," repeated Mrs. Reed. "He'd be on that side the gate, a-talking and laughing and leaning on it; and Cathy, she'd be in the path by the tall hollyhocks, talking back to him, and fondling the children."

Reed rose up, a strange look on his face. "How long was that going on?"

"Ever so long; I can't remember just," responded Mrs. Reed. "But young Parrifer is only at the Hall by fits and starts."

"And you never told me, woman!"

"I thought no harm of it. I don't think harm of it now," emphatically added Mrs. Reed. "The worst of young Parrifer that I've seen is that he's as soft as a tomtit."

Reed put on his hat without another word, and walked out. Late as it was, he was going to the Hall. He rang a peal at it, more like a lord than a labourer just let out of prison. There was some delay in opening the door—the household had gone upstairs, but a man came at last.

"I want to see Major Parrifer."

The words were so authoritative; the man's appearance so strange, with his burly frame and his clipped hair, as he pushed forward into the hall, that the servant momentarily lost his wits. A light in a room on the left guided Reed; he entered it, and found himself face to face with Major Parrifer, who was seated in an easy chair before a good fire, spirits on the table, and a cigar in his mouth. What with the curling smoke from that, what with the faint light—for all the candles had been put out but one—the Major did not at first sight distinguish who

his late guest might be. When the bare head and the resolute eyes met his, he certainly paled a little, and the cigar fell on the carpet.

"I want my daughter, Major Parrifer."

To hear a demand made for a daughter when the Major had possibly been thinking the demand might be his life, was undoubtedly a relief, and brought back his courage.

"What do you mean, fellow?" he growled, stamping out the fire of the cigar. "Are you out of your mind?"

"Not quite. You might have driven some out of theirs, though, by what you've done. *We'll let that part be*, Major. I've come to-night about my daughter—where is she?"

They stood looking at each other. Reed stood just inside the door, his hat in his hand; he did not forget his good manners even in the presence of his enemy; they were a habit with him. The Major stared at him: he really knew nothing whatever of the matter, not even that the girl was missing; and he did think Reed's imprisonment must have turned his brain. Perhaps Reed saw that he was not understood.

"I come home from the prison, into which you put me, to find my daughter Catherine gone. She went away the day I was taken up. Where she went, or what she's doing, heaven knows; but you or yours are answerable for it, whichever way it may be."

"You have been drinking," said Major Parrifer.

"*You* have, maybe," returned Reed, glancing at the spirits. "Either Cathy went out on a harmless jaunt, and is staying away because she can't face the shame at home which you have put there; or else she went out to meet your son, and has been taken away by him. I think it must be the last; my fears tell it me; and, if so, you can't be off knowing something of it. Major Parrifer, I must have my daughter."

Whether the hint given about his son alarmed the Major, causing him to forget his bluster for once and answer civilly, he certainly did it. His son was in Ireland with his regiment, he said; had not been at the Hall for weeks and weeks: he could answer for it that Lieutenant Parrifer knew nothing of the girl.

"He was here at Christmas. I saw him."

"And left two or three days after it. How dare you, fellow, charge him with such a thing? He'd wring your neck for you if he were here."

"Perhaps I might wring his first. Major Parrifer, I want my daughter."

"If you do not get out of my house, I'll have you brought before me to-morrow for trespassing, and give you a second month's imprisonment," roared the Major, gathering bluster and courage. "You want another month of it: this one does not appear to have done you the good it ought. Now—go!"

"I'll go," said Reed, who began to see the Major really did not

know anything of Cathy—and it had not been very probable that he did. “But I’d like to leave a word behind me. You have succeeded in doing me a great injury, Major Parrifer: you are rich and powerful, I am poor and lowly; you set your mind on my bit of a home, and because you could not drive me from it, you took advantage of your magistrate’s post to sentence me to prison, and so be revenged. It has done me a deal of harm. What good has it done you?”

Major Parrifer could not speak for rage.

“It will come home to you, sir; mark me if it does not. God has seen my trouble and my wife’s trouble, and I don’t believe He ever let such a wrong pass by unrewarded. *It will come home to you, Major Parrifer.*”

George Reed went out, quietly shutting the hall-door behind him, and walked home through the thick flakes of snow that had begun to fall.

I’m sorry I can’t get it all in here. There’s no more room.

JOHNNY LUDLOW.



COMING HOME.

I’VE passed long years of sorrow,

I have wandered far from you,

Since angrily I left my home,

Without one kind adieu.

But death came near, when far away

From all but sea and heaven,

And left me but one wish on earth—

To die at home: forgiven.

I’ve heard thy voice, my mother,

Through many a stormy night;

Thine eyes shone when none other

Gave me a ray of light.

That look of mother-love and pain,

It would not let me rest;

It has brought me back thy child again,

To die upon thy breast.

SOMETHING ABOUT WORKING-MEN.

BY ONE OF THEMSELVES.

OF late years, and more especially of late months, in view of the coming suffrage, so much has been said, written, lectured, and declaimed concerning the working-classes, their character and capacity, that to many it may seem altogether unnecessary to harp on so well-worn a string. However, with much that is valuable and just, so much of misrepresentation is intermingled—so many outrageously “fancy” portraits are palmed off as genuine photographs of the sons of toil, that it occurred to me, a working-man, to endeavour to give, albeit unused to word-weaving, some of my impressions of those with whom I am daily brought into contact. At the outset it is hardly needful to say that, maugre their manifold faults, the working-classes are neither the sanguinary ruffians bred of Sheffield Thuggism and ultra-democracy, nor yet the namby-pamby, “goody” sort of creatures depicted by the varying writers and speakers who hastily generalize from exceptional specimens. The simple truth is, it is difficult to get at the working-man *as* a working-man. He is essentially a shy bird, and dislikes and evades all attempts to spy—notably, to preach or speak—at him from a height. The well-meaning gentlemen who invite him to meet them at “Social Tea-Meetings,” and then, after an hour or two of didactic talking and transparently condescending fraternization, imagine they have placed themselves, as they will say, perfectly *en rapport* with him, are often egregiously mistaken. Like other folks, he can wear a mask; and the man of the “tea-meeting” is frequently quite a different being from him of the workshop. If educated gentlemen really wish to understand the nature, and take the level, so to speak, of the mind of the masses, they must be prepared to go through an ordeal somewhat analogous to that of Mr. James Greenwood, of “Casual Ward” celebrity. They must doff the broad-cloth, don the fustian, and for the nonce, become one of “ours.” I will try to tell as well as I can (which at best will be a rough and fragmentary way) a little of my experience of the class with whom I have worked for well-nigh twenty years, in regard to their intelligence. I mean the amount of their apprehension and understanding in the ordinary matters of educated human interest, more particularly as evinced in the nature and taste of their reading.

In speaking of the working-classes, I refer solely to the *average* working-man—the man, however, who will form the great bulk of the new constituencies. I am acquainted with not a few whose mental attain-

ments and varied powers of conversation would not disgrace the company of those immeasurably their superiors in social status, and who, barring a little inevitable awkwardness and deficiency in conventional manners, are quite fitted to mingle in educated society. These, however, are exceptional; and though they may justly claim to be considered more typical of their order than Broadheads, are yet relatively too few to entitle them to the designation of representative men.

So far as my experience goes, working men seldom or never care to read that which has taken much thought to produce. In proof of this assertion I could multiply instances. In a large workshop, containing many artificers in wood and iron, where I was employed, I managed to get subscribers to an able daily newspaper to be read at meal-hours. Being elected to the post of reader, besides faithfully giving the local and general news, I read interesting editorial articles and extracts from the London press on questions of current interest. This did not please, and I was forced to abandon it. So long as I fed them with "Atrocious Murders," "Shocking Suicides," "Mysterious Occurrences," and the like, all was attention. Let the examination or trial of some notorious criminal be ever so intolerably prolix, it was listened to with unflagging avidity. But scarcely had the first few sentences of a well-reasoned article on the "situation" in America, the prospects of Reform, or the designs of Bismarck or the French Emperor passed my lips, than a palpable change came over my hitherto quiescent auditory. Unsuppressed yawns, followed by *sotto voce* comments on the previous murders and burglaries, showed unmistakably that to them the "spirit" of the press was extracted. After a few ineffectual attempts to create and foster a different taste, I had to succumb, and confine myself entirely to the strictly narrative portions of the journal. I was threatened that, unless I gave up reading what they sweepingly termed "a lot o' stuff," they would withdraw their subscriptions. With them a newspaper was nothing unless it was paragraphy; the only exceptions to their intolerance of leading articles being in the case of certain journals, the Pariahs of the press, whose weekly glorifications of the People, and abasings of the Aristocracy, were heard with relish. And here I may remark, in passing, on their astounding credulity and obtuseness in regard to this matter. Instead of estimating these precious effusions at their true worth, it was not uncommon to hear them express warm admiration at the "fearless honesty" of the writers in daring to attack royalty and aristocracy, evidently imagining that outspoken journalism (if we can apply these honest words to contemptible rubbish) ran the risks incident to the *régime* of the eighteenth century. Still more signal was the failure of an attempt to establish our facetious friend *Punch*. His first appearance was nearly his last. Pungent cartoons and sparkling letterpress were, Mark Lemon and John Tenniel notwithstanding, involved in one common condemnatory verdict—"silly." One or two of the social-life caricatures, if very palpable, were the only things which re-

ceived an approval, and that qualified. It is annoying to find them so dull in apprehending the point of an exquisite joke, pictorial or otherwise; an amount of explanation fatal to its zest being needed before they catch even a glimmering of its light. The famous "surgical operation" of Sydney Smith is in their case too often a dire necessity.

Nor is their taste in the matter of what may be called general book-literature of a much higher order. In another large establishment, employing hundreds of men, where I worked for several years, a small library was got up chiefly by the exertions of the heads of the concern; it was aided by somewhat indiscriminate donations of books, good, bad, and indifferent. Workmen were admitted members on payment of sixpence a quarter. Very few availed themselves of it; only about fifteen per cent. of the whole. This fact was not so discouraging, however, as the kind of reading indulged in by most of the members. History, biography, standard fiction; in short, what we are usually accustomed to call our English classics; were at a woful discount, while the well-thumbed pages and worn bindings of books of the ultra-sensation and morbidly realist school (as I believe it is called)—productions of the vulgar herd of imitators, I mean—bore unmistakable testimony to the channel prevailing tastes flowed in.

The amount of bad literature devoured was enormous. Tales with bizarre and generally double-barrelled titles, evidently reprints from the columns of certain obscure halfpenny and penny weekly serials were eagerly read, in preference to the works of good authors. That best outcome of the genius of Dickens, "David Copperfield," several of my work-fellows pronounced to be "silly" and "poor," citing for especial censure the passages referring to that exquisite creation "Agnes." Even the irresistible "Micawber" failed to conquer them. I have heard, while at an alehouse table, comparisons instituted between "Adam Bede" and something which the critic called "Ruth the Betrayer; or, the Female Spy," which would have greatly surprised the admirers of George Eliot. Were a committee of working-men to adjudicate concerning the relative merits of authors, with a view to assigning them their proper niches in the Temple of Fame, a more astonishing "redistribution of seats" would take place in that mythic edifice than will ever happen under the new political dispensation.

It must not be imagined that, in saying these things, I am sneering at my brethren. Far from it. In a great measure they cannot help their taste or their ignorance. This condition of intellect is but the result of a neglected state and want of *compulsory* opportunities in youth. Their wretchedly brief and meagre instruction at school, and the, in many cases, almost tender years at which they are set to work, coupled with the carking, grinding anxiety inseparable from the struggle for bread, produce their natural fruit—stunted understandings. Left to himself, the working-man, if he have a taste for reading at all, selects by natural

instinct that which requires the minimum expenditure of thought, and imparts the greatest amusement. Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, and other poets, though, in these days of cheap editions, extensively *bought*, are, I know, but little *read*. They are in truth caviare to the general multitude. If there is one form of literature more than another which working-men undervalue and fail to appreciate, it is poetry. Mere rhyming doggerel is the only poetry they care for. Several whom I persuaded to read "Evangeline" could find nothing to admire in it.

It may be urged that, in spite of his want of appreciation of sound and healthy literature, the working-man has plenty of shrewdness and common sense to guide him in forming just opinions respecting matters of public importance. This is true, but only to a very limited extent. He is shrewd enough in most of the things that lie straight before him in the path of his every-day life. In those palpable and plain concerns that lie on the surface, he seldom forms wrong notions. Beyond these, he can rarely penetrate. Where effects have to be traced to their causes, he generally accepts the conclusions of those to whom, for his weal or woe, he looks up. In regard to this very matter of Reform which has so agitated the nation, I can honestly say I have seldom heard an average working-man open his mouth voluntarily and understandingly on the subject. It is the *élite*, the *aristocracy* of the working-classes (for there *is* such a thing), who have leavened the almost inert mass, and sustained the ferment. I am confident that the mental processes gone through by thousands are limited to the tangible and graspable consideration of flags, scarves, rosettes, and the other paraphernalia of processioning.

The remedy for all this will doubtless come. Before the century is out we may hope to see a salutary change, and a more enlightened generation occupying the place of the present. When the sun of that long-talked-of National Education arises, the clouding mists of ignorance and prejudice will fly away. Never did Rousseau speak more truly than when he said "Prejudice is king of the vulgar." Prejudice the offspring, is also the nurse of ignorance. If the ignorant working-man or woman be inoculated, in youth especially, with an absurd doctrine, dogma, or notion, no power of earthly logic can remove it.

The depraved taste, the distorted moral and mental vision, produced by weekly doses of printed poison, cannot be counteracted by simply putting before the men publications of a healthier kind. It is little else than shooting over their heads. The better taste and judgment can only be acquired in the legitimate way—the way in which it is acquired by other people—efficient school-training in youth. Just so long as national education is retarded, will be our class's amenability to those influences which, for better or for worse, guide or misguide them.

BURIED ALONE.

BY A NEW WRITER.

CHAPTER III.

HAREDALE.

IN a western county of England famous for the beauty of its scenery and its broad, winding river, is situated the seat of the Earl of Haredale. The mansion, built upon rising ground, is surrounded by broad lands and by parterres laid out with the greatest taste. Two terraces stretch in front of the house, the one below the other. Statues and vases, containing the choicest exotics, are scattered abundantly over them. As you drive up the long avenue the immense trees planted centuries ago meet overhead, forming a long, unbroken aisle, so beautiful because so natural; soft and cool and refreshing to the eye; grateful to the hot and weary wayfarer. Seen from the house, the effect of the terraces is charming. Two great fountains play below them, and you may almost fancy the cool spray to be dashing lightly against your cheek. The grass around them is as soft as velvet; you might lie down upon it in the heat of the day, deep in the pages of some favourite book, and fail to discover that beyond the shade the sun is sending the atmosphere up to fever-point. Innumerable glades and glens with their many-coloured shades of verdure stretch around, interspersed with gleaming foliage; in the distance lie a chain of undulating hills, melting into the brilliant eastern purple before the rays of the sun, or at eventide passing into the more subdued and melancholy tint of the golden. Dense woods afar off shut in part of the horizon; murmuring brooks running through them, gentle streams in which the village children love to dabble in the freedom of bare feet. More beautiful than all is that long, winding river, gliding silently on through the centuries in majestic and matchless grandeur.

The present owner of Haredale had come into it unexpectedly; at least, as unexpectedly as an heir-presumptive can. The estate was not entailed; it had been purchased by the present earl's father, who had devised it, by will, to the elder of his two sons: not this one. That son, the elder by several years, came into it. He had appeared to possess everything before him, present and prospective, that could make the world delightful; but he rejoiced in his riches and title a short twelve-

month only, and time was for him no more. His brother succeeded, the present earl.

The latter had one son, now in his twenty-fourth year. It was with great difficulty they had reared him, and his health still gave them cause for anxiety. Had the doctors freely spoken out their opinion, they would have given the father but little cause to hope that his son would ever be his successor. Lady Haredale was a pale, gentle-looking woman, with a low, broad forehead. The earl, in his younger days, had fallen in love with her beauty, and married her, though she had been beneath him in rank. She was much loved by all dependent upon her, for she was one of those few women who seem incapable of giving an unkind word or look, even under provocation; whose natures are made up of sympathy with their fellow-beings; who appear to have lost sight of, and, as it were, buried self, in their earnest purpose to live only to do good. The one great love of her heart was centred in her son; her chief present trouble the uncertain state of his health.

It was the middle of June. A glorious day was fading into evening as the sun gradually sank behind the purple hills visible from the windows of the western drawing-room. The Countess was resting in an easy-chair, and the soft glow was reflected upon her countenance, rendering it most lovely. At the farther end a door stood open, leading into a large conservatory filled with the choicest flowers and exotics, which loaded the air with perfume, and threw over the room an almost Eastern charm. At this moment Lady Haredale was seated back, apparently in deep thought. She had carried herself into the past, and was pondering sadly over a misfortune that had befallen them years ago. The great misfortune of her life; that which, of all things, had contributed to render her the pale, quiet woman she now was; which had tried her as gold is tried; from which she had come out purified and elevated. Years back, when she and her husband were Mr. and Mrs. Masseron, a child had disappeared during their temporary absence from home, their little girl, Lucy. The loss was the worst that could have fallen on them. No other calamity possible to be imagined could so have told upon them; especially upon him. Up to that period, Mr. Masseron had been a harsh, unfeeling, selfish man; not kind to his wife; stern, as a general rule, to his dependents; none too well-conducted in any way. After the loss of the child, whom he had passionately loved, his nature seemed to change. He certainly remained stern and cold, one to whom, in his dark moods, few would venture to address a remark; but his unkindness and the greater part of his selfishness passed away. He became just where he had been cruelly indifferent; considerate where he had been harsh; a man of undoubted moral rectitude where, to say the least of it, the moral qualities of his opinions and mind and manners had been uncertain. People wondered what could have "come to Masseron"; but the Honourable Mr. Masseron held on his altered

way, and never vouchsafed to answer. It cannot be said that he grew to be loved; but he did grow to be respected, and was not, as hitherto, feared.

What rendered the loss of the child all the more hard to bear, was the uncertainty attending it. Was it stolen? or had it wandered away into some ill-placed water, and been drowned? They were the two conjectures the most feasible. The little girl, just turned two, was playing on a lawn near their residence with its nurse—not their present residence; the nurse ran in to get a plaything left behind, and when she got back the child was nowhere to be seen. In the first confusion much time was lost. Neither master nor mistress was at home; nor, so to say, responsible servants. There were three or four of them—the establishment was not a large one in those days—and they only ran about distracted and wild, as if their heads were off their shoulders.

Mr. and Mrs. Masseron came home, and the search commenced. The little thing was strong upon her legs; might have wandered away, and so fallen into that water not half a mile distant, been swept under some one of the passing barges, and thence onward with the current, beyond reach of mourning friends and police bills. Or—oh, woe!—had some miscreant, whether man or woman, come tramping over from those races five miles off, seen the pretty child, and stolen her? *This* was the dread fear tightening the heartstrings of both father and mother. Misfortunes are estimated by comparison; and in the horror of imagining what the child's future fate might be, Mr. and Mrs. Masseron would have welcomed the little dead body, brought home from the water, with a gush of tears, but a strange relief.

No stone that Mr. Masseron or the law could roll, was left unturned to recover the child, living or dead. He felt certain she was not drowned, but stolen: of two dreaded evils everybody is sure to fear the worst. The races (of mere local fame and sport, but of custom long established) always brought together a vast many people: thieves, pickpockets, and (as Mr. Masseron said to himself with a groan whose bitterness might have reached heaven) gipsy-kidnappers amongst them. One of those miserable, hardened ruffians (as hard as *he* used to be) had found his way to the house, and carried away the child! So fully persuaded was Mr. Masseron of this, that it no doubt served to hide other outlets of suspicion from him. It never crossed his mind to glance at the possible fact that the child had been taken in revenge for injury, real or fancied, inflicted by him in his unfeeling carelessness, if not something worse, in the days gone by.

She was never found. Seasons upon seasons had rolled on; the worst of the anguish was past; and the little Lucy lived in their thoughts as a child whom we have loved and buried lives after long years in our own. And yet, although Lady Haredale never spoke of this great sorrow, it was constantly with her. There

was always present and sometimes strangely clear, a vision of her child as she had last seen her: of the pretty golden hair and the large tender blue eyes; of the way the little arms had clung round her neck as if the child instinctively felt the strength and safety of its mother's love; of the manner in which, when she had placed the little one back on its bed, the bright eyes had followed her from the room as if they knew what they were going to lose. This vision was ever before her. The intense longing to receive back her child, lost to her by a far more bitter medium than death, had worn her out. Yet even now she hoped, with a hope almost amounting to conviction, that the day might come when God would answer the long, silent prayer of her life. She was thinking of it now; now as she sat there. She rarely thought of anything else.

The entrance of her son interrupted the reverie: George, Viscount Masseron. He was rather below the middle height, and stooped slightly as he walked, but this was the only defect in an otherwise perfect figure, his head being remarkably well set upon his shoulders, and its fine shape set off by thick curly brown hair. The face might have shown too much repose for some tastes; it was pale, distinguished, undeniably handsome; the eyes were of a rare and beautiful grey, kind, large, and thoughtful. Nearly twenty-four now, he looked younger than his years. Lady Haredale turned to him as he entered, and her face brightened with a fond smile.

"Where have you been, George, that you were not in at dinner?" she asked.

"I could not help it, mother. I met William Rayner. He was driving alone, and picked me up. I went home and dined with him, and he has returned with me. He is somewhere in the grounds with my father."

Lady Haredale did not immediately reply, for the explanation satisfied her: it was one, indeed, she had anticipated. William Rayner was the eldest son of a gentleman of good property, whose estates adjoined Haredale. He, the son, was of a lofty and upright nature, one whom to know was to appreciate, and he was received upon terms of intimacy and friendship in the Earl's family. He and young Masseron had been boys together, close companions; had called each other Georgy and Willy: the mutual appellations were not much altered now, so persistent is habit. A closer or more steadfast friendship has rarely existed between young men: but William Rayner was three or four years the elder.

"Did you see, Mrs. Rayner?" asked Lady Haredale, after a pause. "Is she better?"

"Much better. She dined with us."

"I am glad to hear it; it might have ended very differently. People of Mrs. Rayner's age cannot act imprudently without incurring the risk

of suffering. But we are all apt to forget that we grow older, unless ailments remind us of it. Is William going to remain here the night?"

"Yes. He wished me to stay with him, but I knew you would rather have me at home, and, so without much pressing, he agreed to come back with me. Mother mine," continued Lord Masseron, his tone changing to one of the deepest affection, "why are you so sad again to-night? And why have I to ask you the same question so often and often?"

He had thrown himself at his mother's feet, his arms were round her, his large grey eyes were looking up into her face with that expression of tender love and pathos which is seldom seen but in those whose natures are dreamy, and who live a life of self-absorption. It was very seldom he showed it, the love that glowed within him for his mother. He was usually undemonstrative almost to coldness. He often wondered if she guessed a tenth part of his love for her; a love and influence so constantly present with him when he was away that that in itself caused him to be shy and reserved when they were together. Except at times, when he would come out of his shell and be with her as he had been when a child.

Lady Haredale's face changed as her son's words and tones fell upon her ear. Her eyelids grew red, and she half turned from him. She was beginning to feel, she had felt for some little time now, that these questions could not be always put off.

"Do I look particularly sad this evening?" she asked. "I think mine must be a sad face naturally, George. Never mind."

"But I do mind. I want to mind. The sadness I see in your face, my mother, is not natural sadness. It is more like grief."

"Is it? Well, George, it is nothing new. You have always seen it there."

"But I was not always wise enough, or reflective enough—call it what you will—to see that some cause must exist for it. Why, mother dear, your sighs alone would tell me that."

"George," she gravely said, "I once experienced a great sorrow: a terrible sorrow that clouded my life and your father's. It happened a long long while ago, when you were but a little fellow. The sadness it left lies upon me still, and always will lie. It is what I do not care to talk of."

"Not to me?"

"No, not to you, George. Not to any one. Your father and I have never exchanged a syllable upon the subject for many years."

At the time of the child's disappearance the little lad, George Masseron, was staying at this very place, Haredale, on a visit to his grandfather. The old people had disliked the marriage their second son made, but they received the boy, and grew to love him. They would fain have kept him always: they did keep him a long while. All

that had been said to the child was, that his sister Lucy was dead ; and when he got home again after his long visit, he had already nearly forgotten her.

As a child George Masseron was thought dull, stupid ; his intellect had been slow to awaken. The powers of his mind had remained half dormant until his fifteenth year, and then he suddenly became as clever and intellectual as hitherto he had been backward. In six months he learned as much as most boys will learn in three years, and at the age of eighteen his tutor declared him to be one of the best read and most accomplished scholars he had ever taught. His studies were varied, rather fanciful. The classics, mathematics, astronomy, geology, botany, natural history ; all were taken up and all gone deeply into. And this was the result of a naturally clever mind, for of perseverance George Masseron could boast but little. The gift he possessed innately, above all others, to a degree amounting to genius, was music.

"Mother mine," he resumed, noting the changes in her face, the constraint in her tone, "I have heard that sorrow once spoken of loses its sting. Tell me what this painful trouble is. Do you know"—and he dropped his voice to a tender whisper—"the consciousness of its existence is beginning to trouble *me* ? I see it in your worn face, I hear your sighs in my dreams."

"Hush, George ! You shall know it some time."

Lady Haredale was spared further resistance then by the entrance of Mr. Rayner ; a rather tall man, with a ready address, a free, pleasing voice, and a countenance frank, good, winning. Some people called him plain and some handsome ; but everybody liked the face and liked him.

"So you are here, William !" exclaimed Lady Haredale. "I need not have wondered where George was at the dinner-hour. It is well you have made up your mind to stay, for I had intended to keep you by way of punishment ; you might have sent word home you had borrowed my night-cap."

William Rayner laughed ; the cordial, pleasant laugh habitual to him.

"How is your mother getting on ?"

"Thank you, she is quite well again. And you, dear Lady Haredale ?"

"Oh, I am always well," said Lady Haredale, who was sure to turn off any inquiries as to herself. "Has Lord Haredale been telling you that we have set up a Continental scheme ?"

"No. He was chiefly enlarging upon some native grievance. Something amiss as usual, between his steward and a refractory tenant."

"Ah ! he places blind reliance upon that man Lloyd. George, when you come into power, take care that you do not vest too much authority in the hands of stewards and bailiffs. Depend upon it, too many of them are tempted to abuse trust. But about this plan. We are really going abroad, William."

"What to do?"

"To make a tour, I suppose. Lord Haredale says we all want change. I am not sure but we do."

"Does George go?"

"Certainly. George wants it more than any of us. He gets so worn and weary always in summer."

"And freezes in winter," put in Mr. Rayner.

"Ah, well. I think—if once we get abroad—we shall be tempted to remain for the winter in some more genial climate than this."

"It is only June, Lady Haredale."

"But we may stay a month or two at some one of the cool marine outlets, and go on in September. George says there is only one thing will reconcile him to it—and that is, your companionship."

"Mine?"

"Yours. Why not? You know you were talking of travelling in the autumn. Do go with us, William."

"I should like it," said Mr. Rayner, musingly.

"Of course you would like it. You could not fail to like it, you and George being what you are, a very Damon and Pythias."

"We might each have a worse companion," said Mr. Rayner, his brown eyes bright with honest smiles.

"Well, you will come?"

He did not immediately answer. The proposal seemed singularly opportune, for Mr. Rayner had been wishing to travel for a year or two. His mother urged it. It would give him polish, she said, he was so very downright; and she hoped it might give him fashion also, which she thought he lacked. William had laughed pleasantly, as he always did, while dutifully listening; but his mind had been by no means made up, for he did not care to part for so long with Lord Masseron; some doubt within him whispered that it might be parting for good.

"I think, perhaps, I may go, Lady Haredale; but the proposal requires some consideration," he said, at length.

"Of course it does. Had you said yes at once, I should not have taken it as conclusive. Only—bear in mind one thing, William—we shall start very soon. When Lord Haredale makes his mind up to any change, he loses no time in carrying it out."

Lord Masseron had not spoken; but that his face betrayed he was far from indifferent to the decision, they might have thought him in a reverie. Crossing to the end of the room where a piano stood he sat down to it. The shades of evening were falling on the room: presently the listeners would see him but indistinctly. He played with marvellous expression: but he had never possessed sufficient energy to become thorough master of the art, either in theory or execution: had he been forced to it the result had been widely different. His love of music amounted to a passion; he possessed genius so great that it

scarcely wanted cultivation to be called out. Reader, have you a genius for music? Have you even the gift of thoroughly appreciating it? If not, you cannot understand the effect that music had upon George Masseron. Many people hear the composition of a great master played through; they go into ecstasies; lift their hands and call it sublime, thinking themselves connoisseurs, believing they recognize and feel its beauties. But the admiration is not genuine, the love is forced. Unless the recitative of a great master lay hold upon your imagination; unless its pure and flowing melodies thrill your heart, causing the blood to leave the cheek and the tear to fill the eye; unless it carry you out of yourself, expanding the breadth and height and depth of your soul, lifting it, as it would seem, into the regions of the Infinite and the Eternal; unless you experience all this, and more than all this, you have not genius. There had been moments when the beauty of some surpassing melody had so called Lord Masseron out of himself that he would have been willing to die then and there beneath its influence. He had wept involuntarily at harmonies, and started to find himself giving way to what was neither weak nor unmanly; for the tears were called up by the stirring of all his better feelings. He possessed a great and grand nature. A nature—as all such natures are—incapable of being appreciated; scarcely ever to be understood. Should any think these remarks overdrawn, untruthful—ultra far—rely upon one thing: that they cannot feel or realize these influences themselves: and never will. It is but a few who rejoice in the bright gift of affinity with that divine art, the enjoyment of which, we are led to believe, will be one of our chief delights in the world to come.

Lady Haredale and Mr. Rayner were both fond of music, though not as Lord Masseron was. They listened in silence to his dreamy playing, to the flowing melodies and rare harmonies, improvised as he sat, in which the twilight always seemed to speak to him. He would stay there, lost to the lapse of time, extemporizing soft, low strains of marvellous sweetness: it was his mode of giving expression to the thoughts that the hour of the fading day always brought into his mind. A pure, holy mind was his; a noble nature, full of lofty purpose.

At breakfast the following morning the Earl of Haredale—a silent man now, with gray hair; and no fire in a face that must once have been very handsome—spoke of his plans: consulting Mr. Rayner a little; a far more practical man than his son; and appearing to take it for granted he was to accompany them. Afterwards the two young men rode forth together, Lord Masseron saying he would go part of the way with his friend.

“Don’t ride too far or fast, George,” was Lady Haredale’s parting salutation. “You know the hard exercise is not good for you.”

The caution was scarcely necessary. Riding tired him, and with

his doubtful health he knew it did him more harm than good. But he loved the exercise, and he loved it specially when in the society of Rayner. Certainly these two men were a second David and Jonathan : their friendship as steadfast, their love almost as strong, as in that marvellous history recorded in the Book of Samuel. It arose no doubt in a great measure from the openness and purity of their natures : they were both alike in this respect, and each knew and felt the worth existing in the other. Without this assurance there can be no friendship between men, for only those men are capable of it who are altogether worthy : those in whose lives "there lurketh no hidden thing" which can in any way loosen the sacred bands of friendship. A few such exist in the world. More real men, let me tell you, in the angels' sight than they of the multitude, who would prove their manliness by the sacrifice of all that is good, drinking deep draughts at pleasure's shrine.

They rode off due west, the way to Mr. Rayner's home. But Lord Masseron chose, as he often did, to go through a charming part of the grounds of Haredale, on which the great window of the west drawing-room looked. It was a dell of rural beauty ; most beautiful at the sunset hour. As the sun sunk on its course, to disappear gradually behind the distant hills, it flooded the landscape with a glorious golden light, rendering the scene bright and rich as a page from fairy-land, a peaceful, pure spot, almost fitted for Paradise. The surrounding trees were tinted with the same bright hue, and their leaves kept up a gentle rustle in the wind, resembling the melancholy vibration of some enchanted instrument. The cool ripple of a stream, gurgled along in ceaseless monotony, reminding you of old Time, who also never stands still, but goes constantly on, shifting and varying the scenes on the stage of life. In the distance the more majestic river wound its course between green banks, here underneath a stately arch, there under a wooden viaduct. Close by were the ruins still of an ancient monastery, St. Augustin's. The house had been called by the same name when the old earl bought it, but he did not like the name, and changed it to "Haredale." It was not the sunset hour now, but the place was little less beautiful under the deep blue sky of the summer's morning, and Lord Masseron checked his horse, and sat still. The spot had always worn for him a quite unexplainable attraction. William Rayner, accustomed to his moods, waited quietly.

"Rayner, I often think I should like to be buried here."

He was looking at one particular spot not far from the stream, where the mossy grass was soft as velvet, and a magnificent weeping elm drooped its graceful branches, sweeping a large space with its shade.

"After you shall be dead, I presume you mean," was Mr. Rayner's answer, who did not always give in to the dreamy fancies of his dreaming friend. But Lord Masseron seemed not to detect the sarcasm. "For my part I would rather lie in consecrated ground."

"The ground was consecrated once—if rumour speak true. It is thought to have been the burial-place of some great man amidst the Puritans. That may be yes or no. As to consecrating the ground—that I suppose might be easily done now. A tombstone under the weeping elm would be seen from the home windows."

"And look picturesque, no doubt. Meanwhile, as you are not quite ready for one, and I am in haste to get back, suppose we go on."

Lord Masseron smiled, and touched his horse. But he could not take his eyes from the fair and peaceful spot; they rested on this side and on that, and chiefly on the beautiful weeping elm casting its extensive shade.

"Don't forget that I have said it, William, should the time come when it may be useful."

"Said what?"

"That I should like to be buried here."

Mr. Rayner's answer was to ride on quickly out of the little dell, as though he had not heard. And so on to the high road, past the turning by the Green Pond. A clear, bright pond, in spite of its name.

"How should you like me to join you in this coming expedition, George?" began Mr. Rayner. "You did not say a word when Lady Haredale proposed it."

"You know so well what I should say on the subject that I thought it needless to speak," was Lord Masseron's reply. "If you go with us, I shall look forward to it with the utmost pleasure; if you do not, I shall view it with indifference."

"Well spoken, old fellow. I have been thinking it over in the night and have made up my mind. I will promise you to go—subject to approbation at home."

"A bargain!" cried Lord Masseron; and a flush of pleasure rose to his face.

No theme for conversation wanted after that! They rode on, talking eagerly of where they would go and what they would see; until at length Lord Masseron, feeling that he had outstretched the limits of his ride, shook hands with Rayner and turned his horse towards home.

He had nearly gained the Green Pond, and was going to turn off that he might pass homewards through his favourite spot, when some one suddenly started from the hedge and darted right across the horse's path. The horse swerved aside, all but throwing his rider. It proved to be a poor young woman whom most people shunned for mad, but to whom Lord Masseron had invariably been kind and gentle.

"Ah! ah! she cried, "I said I should see you again if I had patience. You rode away this morning, Lord Masseron, but I knew you would return. I could not die without bidding you farewell: you who have always been so kind to me when all the rest were cruel. Do you think I did not feel it? Ay! They called me mad, they said

I had been wicked; but it was they made me mad. And now it is all over! I have been summoned, and I must go. Farewell; farewell! Hark! *he* is calling me. I come! I come! Farewell, laddie, farewell!"

She waved her hand sadly, flew from him across the grass with incredible swiftness, and plunged into the pond. What Lord Masseron would have done was uncertain; he could not swim; but his horse, frightened out of *his* senses, bore him away at a break-neck speed, and he could only try to keep his seat. In the agony of the moment his presence of mind nearly forsook him. He might not have been of use had he retained it. It was all for the best. He had surely plunged into the pond after the woman, in frantic efforts to rescue a drowning soul, and perhaps been lost with her: as it was, the horse carried him homewards; it was but a stone's throw; and into the midst of those who could be more useful than he. He reached the stable-yard in a state of heat and excitement that it would be hard to describe. He had no physical strength; he had been forbidden to ride fast. But he told his tale, and sent men off flying to the Green Pond; he sent others for medical help; he ordered hot baths and blankets to be made ready; and just when he was taking breath after all this, in the extremity of exhaustion, a small red stream began to trickle from his lips.

The rescued woman got well and was effectually cared for; but for many days Lord Masseron lay between life and death. Good nursing and youth gained the victory in the end, and he rallied. The doctors declared that no immediate danger was to be apprehended; nay, that if he could be got to a warmer climate he might yet recover health and strength. It was August then, cool weather had set in, and the cold of an English winter would soon be approaching. Mr. Rayner had taken up his head-quarters at Haredale. Had any inducement been required to urge him to accompany them to Italy, it was now found. He felt that George would scarcely get on now without him; the weakness was still great; and Mr. Rayner knew, though he did not care to admit as much to his own mind, that it was quite possible the young nobleman might never live to return home. It almost seemed that the invalid himself thought so. "If you and my mother go with me," he said to Rayner, "I have no objection to offer; but if either of you shall stay behind here, nothing shall induce me to leave Haredale."

"I suppose you feel pretty safe in making the threat?" said Rayner.

"I suppose so," replied Masseron smiling; "though to any one but you I should be a great drag. Stupid and helpless, unless I make rapid strides towards health on the journey."

"Make up your mind to that, old fellow. My care will do it all for you. I shall instal myself as valet and head-nurse. I hope you will give me liberal wages."

That evening they were consulting together as to the best place for

their ultimate destination, when Rayner, who had just come in from his own home, entered the room, a letter in hand.

"Look here," he said, "we have been wondering where to go to first. My father has just received this letter from Mr. Bosanquet. They are at Sorrento, and he speaks of the place in terms of rapture. He is so matter-of-fact that I think there must be some truth in it. I do not know him; they have lived abroad for years; but my father knew him well once upon a time. Suppose we also go to Sorrento?"

"It is so far," objected Lady Haredale. "I had thought of Nice, or ——"

"No, no," interrupted Lord Masseron. "I will go to none of those crowded places. I would far rather go to Sorrento. Let us decide upon it. What difference will a day or two's extra travelling make to us?"

It was thus decided. And within a week of the decision the four had started on their way.

CHAPTER IV.

LINKS IN A CHAIN.

LORD Masseron grew better beneath the blue skies of Italy; seemingly well, and tolerably strong. It was thought advisable to remain abroad at any rate for several months, in the hope that so lengthened a sojourn might restore him to permanent health. They were at Sorrento, Mr. Rayner with them, whose movements were regulated by theirs. And theirs, it must be owned, by the family with whom they had made close acquaintance, Mr. and Mrs. Bosanquet, and their daughter Caroline.

Caroline Bosanquet was a tall, dark girl, possessed of high features and high mettle. They announced very plainly that she had a strong will of her own; that if any one presumed to enter the lists of opposition against her, they would probably retire from the field in inglorious defeat. Her father and mother were so completely ruled by her, that she had but to express a wish, after the fashion of an only and indulged child, and, however wild, it was granted. The acquaintance had ripened into intimacy; that sort of intimacy which people seem to get into abroad, generally throwing it off when once more under the influence of their native air.

Miss Caroline Bosanquet came bouncing into Lady Haredale's drawing-room one sunny morning, with unusual haste and fierceness.

"Ah! Lady Haredale, I am glad to find you at liberty," she ex-

claimed; "I came out only to see you. Have you heard the news?"

"To what do you allude? Letters from England?"

"No, no. Sorrento concerns us more nearly than England just now, and something has happened in it."

"I should think so by your excitement, Caroline. Has Mount Vesuvius broken out afresh, and are its ashes about to pay us a visitation? Scarcely, I should say."

"Worse eruptions sometimes take place than those of distant volcanos, Lady Haredale. Prepare for a shock. Sorrento is in a state of revolt: the natives have risen."

Lady Haredale, scared for the moment, rose hurriedly from her seat. "Is this true, Caroline?"

"It's quite true. We shall have to make our escape from the place; unless we would run the risk of being murdered in our beds or out of them."

Lady Haredale was gaining thought, and smiled. "Are you sure the revolt has not taken its rise in your own imagination, my dear? A ruse to get us all to Naples—that desirable resting-place of your present dreams?"

"Indeed, no," said Miss Bosanquet, flushing at the question, for it told home in a degree. "There *is* trouble in the town. Accounts may be somewhat exaggerated; but at all events two Englishmen were attacked in the street last night; one is dead, the other dying. I'm glad it has happened; it will drive you away. And we, you know, have only waited for you."

"How can you speak of this so lightly?" rebuked Lady Haredale. "Suppose it had happened to those belonging to you or me, what should you have said then?"

"I should have said 'tant pis;' I should have gone into black; I should have turned Roman Catholic, and ruined myself in burning candles to all the saints," replied the young lady, with her usual recklessness. "But what is to be done, madam?"

"If it be as you say, I suppose we shall have to leave a little sooner than we intended. What does Mrs. Bosanquet say?"

Mamma has lost her wits with fright, and has turned seer. She foretells that if we remain here we shall all share the fate of the Englishmen. I am speaking seriously, Lady Haredale. Nothing would induce her to venture out again in Sorrento, and we are to proceed to Naples with speed."

"Naples?" mused Lady Haredale. "That is not very far off."

"Far enough to be out of danger," returned Miss Bosanquet, mistaking the words. "It will be a step nearer Rome, too."

"Why not go to Rome at once?"

"Because I prefer Naples," independently avowed Miss Bosanquet.

"I tell mamma that Rome is not in a very peaceful state; and the banditti are in the voisinage. I have a great desire to stay in Naples. It is more gay than Sorrento, and can boast of a good theatre."

"Gaiety for ever! Is not that your favourite motto?" asked Lady Haredale, with a sad smile. "It is natural to the young; but I fear you are almost too fond of it, Miss Caroline. You will sober down in time. You may marry, and then cares and troubles will come."

"Do cares and troubles come to every one, Lady Haredale?"

"To every one. I believe none are exempt."

"Surely you have not known trouble? You seem to me never to have known an hour's sorrow?"

"What makes you think so?"

"You are so calm, so tranquil; always the same: nothing appears to annoy you or even ruffle you, in any way."

"You must not judge by appearances, Caroline. Every heart knoweth its own bitterness, and mine has known more than most have. Every heart, from the king to the beggar, has its own peculiar and individual sorrow, though it may be hidden from the world. It may be an utter secret, not to be whispered; if so it is all the worse to bear; but there it is, with its gnawing pain. In solitude, when no one is by to hear, it may indulge momentarily its anguish, and cry aloud with a faint, weary cry for the day when all endurance will have ended. It may have to hide its misery behind a smiling face, cheating the world into the belief that of all hearts it is the most light and careless. It will laugh and dance, and talk and sing; and in the delusion of the moment almost make itself believe that the world is fair and worth living for. But in the retirement of the closet the delusion will vanish as a dream, and the reality be more vivid than before. It is worse than folly to put any trust in appearances," added Lady Haredale, in a changed and notably indifferent tone, as though she had been momentarily forgetting herself. "Have you never read the Eastern fable, where the king pointed out a man as being, in his judgment, the happiest in the world? The courtiers found upon inquiry that of all men that particular man was the most miserable. I have often thought how true that is to life."

"I cannot believe this to be the experience of all, Lady Haredale. It is too melancholy. I, for instance, have never known a day's trouble."

"You are only just beginning life," replied Lady Haredale. "Wait until you are a few years older—until, as I said just now, you are married. As yet you have probably never fancied yourself even in love?"

A bright flush rose to Miss Bosanquet's face. She left her seat and went to the window, fearing it should tell its tale.

"Who am I likely to fall in love with?" she carelessly said. "What society have we abroad? 'La Signora' is a pretty title, but it could

not induce me to marry one of these hot-headed Italians. So the sooner we go back to England the less chance I shall have of dying an old maid. I don't like old maids," she added, in a scornful kind of tone, that betrayed, if ever tone did, a haughty self-assumption of her own beauty and power of conquest. "They are fond of cats."

A smile, that her sweetness of disposition alone saved from being one of condemning pity, crossed the lips of Lady Haredale. "Old maids have had far deeper romances, tender and more touching, than some of us married women, Miss Caroline."

"Possibly. And so you think I shall marry, Lady Haredale?"

"I think? My dear, do you take me for a gypsy or a visionary soothsayer?"

"Certainly not for either; I only went as far as fancy. Just as we are apt to fancy what Christian name a stranger bears, so we fancy that such and such a one is destined to marry, and that other not."

"When you have lived in the world as long as I have, Caroline, you will know that just as *fancy* is one of the compasses by which a great many people steer their course, so is it one of the most delusive. A phantom of the imagination at best. But I see you think I could answer your question; then for once I will turn clairvoyante. I predict that you will never be a maiden of a certain age. You will marry; or else die young."

"Die! Do I look like a person likely to go into a fit or a fever? I never had a day's illness in my life, Lady Haredale. I am always full of health and spirits. Die!"

"Health and spirits are not everything. Ah, my dear, perhaps the Englishman now lying dead in the town, could have said the same thing but a few minutes before his death. You cannot see a day, no nor an hour, into the future; you cannot escape from your allotted destiny."

"As to that—I am no fatalist. I am hasty and impulsive, but I know how to take care of myself."

She glanced down the street, and soon the flush on her face deepened to crimson; her eyes brightened, and her heart beat faster. "Here come Lord Masseron and Mr. Rayner, sailing along arm-in-arm," she remarked presently, as quietly as she could.

"I am glad of it," replied Lady Haredale. "I shall send them off to this poor Englishman."

"It strikes me they have forestalled your wish, Lady Haredale. They are walking very slowly and sombrely."

"Probably they have. It is what every Englishman of right feeling would do voluntarily."

"Of course; or Englishwoman either. I should not have hesitated to go myself, had there been nobody better to replace me."

Lord Masseron came in. There was but little change in him, and

he looked well. He was followed by William Rayner, gay, bright, hearty as ever. Miss Bosanquet nervously unbuttoned and re-buttoned her glove. She shook hands with Lord Masseron openly, without any kind of embarrassment. He remarked upon her early visit; she laughingly rejoined with careless freedom that he was of course her attraction. But when she turned to Mr. Rayner a chill seemed to have fallen on her; her whole manner was constrained. She allowed her hand to remain passively in his for the moment he retained it: none could tell what a thrill of ecstasy the mere contact sent through her pulses; or how it would linger on her remembrance for time to come.

"You are quiet and orderly to-day!" she remarked, addressing Lord Masseron, but meaning it for both of them.

"A charge to which we can usually plead guilty," he replied. "But we have had a good deal to make us sober this morning."

"Then you have really been to see that poor Englishman?" said Lady Haredale.

"We have, mother."

"And is it all true? Is one of them really dead?"

"They are both dead."

"Both!" cried Miss Bosanquet, for once really shocked. "Dead already! Is it possible?"

Lord Masseron nodded. "We heard about it early this morning, found out where the poor fellows had been taken to, and went down. The one was dead, the other dying. In less than an hour all was over."

"Was he sensible? Could he give you any particulars?" asked Lady Haredale.

"He could give none at all. He remembered nothing except that when he and his brother were returning through the streets late last night they were suddenly struck down. They were middle-aged men; fortunately, as he said, without near ties."

It appeared to be a painful subject to Miss Bosanquet, for having heard all they had to tell, she rose to leave, with a manner unusually subdued.

Both the young men accompanied her home, and then turned back without entering. The being able to walk so much seemed an evidence how greatly Lord Masseron's health had improved. Lady Haredale looked upon him as cured.

"What are you thinking of, Masseron?" suddenly asked Mr. Rayner.

"Of you." And as Lord Masseron spoke, a flush, born of some passing emotion, or of the consumption he seemed to inherit, shone in his face.

"Of me! Then I wish you would think aloud. Your thoughts might run upon a better subject."

"Did it ever cross your mind to fancy that a certain young lady has thrown away her heart upon you?" asked Lord Masseron.

Rayner laughed. "I don't think I am given to self-conceit, Masseron. What do you mean? I don't even understand you."

"Yet I spoke sufficiently plain English. I will put it somewhat differently. Have you by your manner led a fair damsel of our acquaintance to suppose your affections are engaged to her?"

"Certainly not. My affections, as you call them, are quite free. And as to playing with any woman's feelings for the sake of playing, whether from vanity or carelessness, it is not I that would do it. You can't doubt me, old fellow."

"Right. The doubt I had was whether you might really have fallen in love with her, and unconsciously betrayed it."

"Not I. But to whom does all this refer?"

"Caroline Bosanquet."

William Rayner laughed aloud. "How absurd of me not to guess! And how ridiculous of you to beat about the bush! Caroline Bosanquet is no more to me than that little orange-girl across the road, who always, I notice, casts upon you touching glances from her great black eyes as we go by. Miss Bosanquet! Why we have been intimate as brother and sister! What has put this strange fancy into your head?"

"The intimacy, I suppose, must have prevented its entering yours. I am glad to hear you call it fancy. She would never make you a good wife. But I am sorry for Caroline Bosanquet."

"You are in error, for once, George," returned Mr. Rayner. "Caroline Bosanquet no more loves me than she loves you. I am not the sort of fellow to take captive her imagination: there's nothing fast in me. Like mates with like."

"Don't indulge that opinion, for it's a fallacy. These fast girls—I cannot like the word—generally fall in love with quiet men."

"Well, it does not matter much one way or the other, old friend, in regard to the present instance," replied Rayner. "Caroline Bosanquet will never be anything to me, and I would strongly recommend her to keep her love in safe custody until it is sought for. And, if I am not mistaken in her, it is precisely what she will do."

Lord Masseron said no more; and Mr. Rayner changed the subject. He began speaking of the wonderful alteration there was in his companion's health and strength—just as though it were fully established.

"Yes, I am better," said Lord Masseron quietly, when he had heard him to the end. "Does it not strike you that it may be a mere temporary improvement?"

His looks were so serious, his tone so hushed, his manner altogether so suggestive, that Mr. Rayner felt strangely startled as with some painful prevision.

"What do you mean, Masseron? You *are* better."

"Of course I am better : or where would have been the use of all this change from our own cold climate? It is only a respite, Rayner. I am certainly falling into that malady for which there is neither remedy nor hope."

The blood had mounted into his usually pale face, and the hectic glow rendered it beautiful. It looked three-parts etherealized ; almost purified from earth and its sin. The fine earnest eyes were bright exceedingly with an intense light, partly natural, partly the result of atent disease.

William Rayner gazed upon him ; his pulses quickening, his sight misty. He saw how great was the cause for fear ; saw it as though some blinding screen had been suddenly lifted : and the fact was very grievous to him.

"Have you found any recent change, or felt worse lately—that you should say this?"

"I don't know that there is much *change* about the matter at all. I have never felt as I ought since that day at Haredale. The cough has been bad at night lately ; the chest has become painful."

"But George, my dear George, you must speak about this," urged Mr. Rayner in a sort of agitation. "You must go where the best advice can be had. Have you been keeping these symptoms to your elf?"

"Why should I speak of them? If the worst is to come, nothing can avert it ; not all the doctors in the world can save me. So long as I am able to bear up and seem well, I shall do so, for the sake of hose at home."

"But the doctors might alleviate the symptoms and save you for a time. If I understand you to mean that you would conceal your sickness for the sake of sparing pain at home, you are quite wrong. Masseron, forgive me—if you do not speak of this to Lord Haredale, I shall take it upon myself to do so : my conscience would not let me be silent. Don't talk so quietly about dying ; I could not get on without you. Why, George, old boy, reflect ! we have been chums since we were in pinafores. I cannot lose you. Do you suppose I could ever make a friend of another man?"

"But if it must be? It is easier to lose a friend by death than in any other way. The separation would not be for ever, remember. I too would wish to live, so that we might grow old together : and I know it will be harder to bear for you who stay than for me who must go."

"This must be seen to," repeated Mr. Rayner.

"I will not have you mention the subject at home, Rayner : there's no necessity for their knowing it yet. I will go to Dr. Grant if you like ; now, this very morning that we are out : I have thought of doing it before. If he gives me hope, well and good ; if he does not, I must

choose my own time for divulging the worst at home. It will be a blow there : to my father on account of the succession ; to my mother on account of the love she bears me."

"And what of the blow to yourself?—should Dr. Grant tell you there's no hope."

"It will not be a *blow* to me, Rayner : nothing that we fully expect can be that. I am not afraid of death : I have thought of it so much as to have become quite reconciled to it."

"You fancy so."

"I am sure so. At night I often lie awake for hours, and that you know is a time when serious reflection comes into the mind. I have dwelt a great deal upon our future condition—that state of glorious fruition described in the Apocalypse. Sometimes I fall asleep when these thoughts are upon me, and dream that I am gliding over the river in a golden boat : angels are spreading their wings over me to shield my sight from the brightness that as yet it cannot look upon ; strains of music come floating down the stream, filling me with such rapture as I have never experienced in my waking hours. Perfection seems to reign everywhere ; there is nothing to pain or shock the taste ; all is purity ; all a still, breathing, exquisite existence. I seem to be enjoying a most perfect peace, to have entered into a rest from which there is no cessation ; of which it is impossible to grow weary because it is so holy. And then I awake to find myself so hot and feverish that I have to toss the bed-clothes off me."

Not another word was spoken. William Rayner indeed did not know what comment to make, or how to make it. But a feeling crossed his mind, bringing with it somewhat of awe, that the speaker must assuredly be fast approaching the portals of the celestial world, or these thoughts of it would not come to him.

In silence they reached Dr. Grant's. He was at home, and they were shown into his study. Lord Masseron stated his case in a few plain words : and then asked to be dealt with candidly.

Dr. Grant looked at him very attentively for a few moments, and then sounded and questioned him.

"Are you aware that I have made consumption my special study Lord Masseron?" he asked, when the interview was nearly over, in reply to a second appeal for the truth. "My opinion rarely errs."

"In that case I shall have greater confidence in your verdict," was Lord Masseron's answer. "Let me hear it ; for once deal with a patient as you would with yourself."

But Dr. Grant hesitated. "It is not pleasant, perhaps not wise, to deal openly with a sick patient."

"For what reason?" asked Lord Masseron, referring to the hesitation. "Do you fear that I cannot bear the worst? Why, I already know it. I came here only to satisfy my friend Rayner. If by concealing the

facts you could prolong my life, there'd be some reason in it. Come, I will speak the words for you, Dr. Grant : there is no hope."

"It is partly true, my dear young friend ; you cannot, I fear, get well speedily," cried the cautious doctor. "I should recommend your remaining in Italy for the winter."

"Now, doctor, this won't do. You cannot raise false hopes in me, and to give them to my friends would be cruel in the end. I can read your veto just as clearly as though you spoke it. How long shall I be likely to last?"

"Nay," said the doctor, forced or surprised into candour, "there is no immediate danger. I do not say it will not come on, and I cannot say whether the time will be long or short first ; but when you begin to fail, you will fail rapidly. I wonder at myself for telling you this : it is not our usual custom, you know."

"I am not the worse for it," replied Lord Masseron ; "all the better. The mistaken feeling that would delude a doomed man into believing his life a good one, is what I have never been able to understand. Surely it must be incurring an awful responsibility."

"The responsibility is great either way," said Dr. Grant.

"No doubt it is in most cases. For myself, I thank you, doctor. Now and again a doubt would cross me whether I might not indulge hope yet : and it was well, quite well, to set that at rest."

Putting a heavy fee into the doctor's hand, Lord Masseron went out. As for Mr. Rayner, he had never spoken a word throughout the painful scene, but sat apart, much like a dumb man. His heart had grown sick. Their friendship was of that rare and sacred nature of which the world knows so little : and in this the first shock of the blow, William Rayner thought he could willingly have sacrificed his life to save George Masseron's, incredible calamity that for him, in the height of his youth and health and strength, death would have seemed. He revelled in the sense of life ; in the strength and glory of his manhood ; in the perfect organization which in itself is one of the greatest of all blessings which makes earth so fair to us, so hard to part with.

"George, I don't know that I can bear this."

Lord Masseron turned to him with a smile that had lost none of its sweetness. If the canker-worm of sickly despair had been within his breast, it would not have failed to betray itself. He had thought before that his days were numbered ; he knew it unmistakably now ; and bore up bravely. That some sinking of spirit had attended the fiat was only too natural ; for the best-prepared of us cling to earth when death approaches before its time ; but he did not let it appear, and would overcome it speedily. Instead of wasting precious and fleeting moments in repining, in useless longing for what might have been, but never could be, he would endeavour more firmly to fix his mind upon the unseen world ; to think of it as his only abiding-place and his future home.

The thought that most troubled him now was the grief he knew it would bring to Lord and Lady Haredale, and he was determined they should not learn it before it was absolutely necessary. It was quite uncertain how long he had to live; it might be many months, it might be few; and he would try to bring the inevitable past before them by degrees, by hints rather than downright words. This he said to Mr. Rayner.

To the surprise of both, as they went into Lady Haredale's presence, they found Miss Bosanquet again with her, and in the full flow of conversation.

"You only were wanted to complete the argument," she cried, rising in her eagerness. "Tell me, Lord Masseron, are you not sick of Sorrento and willing to leave it? Give us the truth."

"You are right, young lady," replied Lord Masseron, speaking with gaiety, deceiver that he was. "When you are gone, and we are gone, Sorrento, in my opinion, will have lost all its attractions. I must say I should like Naples for a change: that desirable Eden of your hopes and wishes. Together we might manage to find out more beauties in it than really exist."

Miss Bosanquet turned to Lady Haredale. "You hear that," she cried. "Sorrento is no longer safe; I may be killed next; and we are all tired of it."

"You told me this morning it was in revolt."

"Well, it's not much better. Do accompany us to Naples, Lady Haredale."

"I cannot promise that. We will follow you shortly: in a week, I dare say. Lord Haredale has made up his mind to go there."

"A week may mean a month," objected Miss Bosanquet. "How shall I get on without you? I have learned to like you, Lady Haredale; I feel desolate if a day passes without seeing you."

Lady Haredale laughed. "You must control your impatience, my dear," she replied. "What will you do when, in the natural course of events, our paths shall again separate?"

"I won't think of that time. Whenever the future shows itself out disagreeably, my custom is to banish it utterly. I do not like trouble and care and sorrow; I never yet met with such miserable-sounding things: and if, as you told me this morning, Lady Haredale, they attack us all, why I shall just scorn and defy them when they come. Am I right Lord Masseron?"

He simply nodded; making no other answer.

"We shall look out for a suitable house for you in Naples," she continued; "it will be more comfortable than an hotel for a prolonged residence. We shall remain there—oh, until next summer's heat comes; and I hope you will. Lord Masseron loves music; Naples will therefore possess an attraction for him that Sorrento does not."

"Yes," he said, dreamily, as if speaking to himself, rather than in

answer, "I love music with my whole heart and soul. To me it has long seemed to be a connecting link between this world and the next. When man fell, God left him the capacity to enjoy one of heaven's great attributes—for it belongs to heaven more than to earth. Oh, it is a gift to those who possess it! It refines the mind; it elevates the heart beyond all other things. It is one of the few pleasures that excess of indulgence in cannot entail harm."

"Then you will join us at Naples?" said Miss Bosanquet practically; who at times regarded the Viscount Masseron as an incomprehensible dreamer.

"Yes, shortly. I will urge speedy departure on my father."

The Bosanquets quitted Sorrento in accordance with arrangements. The Haredales and Mr. Rayner followed, and joined them at Naples. It is curious to note, as experience comes to us in our passage through the world, how wonderfully the links that form the chain of our life's career fit into one another. "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will."

In looking back at the past years, tracing out the events that have characterized them, we marvel and are silent. If at any time we have essayed to take destiny into our own hands, abandoning ourselves to self-guidance, attempting to carry out absolutely our own will, things have almost always gone wrong. We were brought up with a jerk; and the jerk has re-fitted together two divided links of the chain.

The Haredales found the furnished house at Naples, already looked at for them by the Bosanquets, to suit very well. It stood in the midst of a large and lovely garden, all terraces, and trees, and lonely walks, and (most desirable of all in Naples) shade. Lady Haredale, loving the shade more than the sunshine, practically as well as metaphorically, decided on the house at once, subject to her lord's approval. He gave a casual look round, saw there was a pleasant and detached smoking-room, and took it. If the earl could be said to have devoted himself to any one pursuit of late years, good, or indifferent, or bad, it was that of smoking.

The house next door to them was more unpretending, and its garden smaller. It was inhabited, as Lord Haredale was told on inquiry, by a Madame Weber, whose son was the great director of the great Naples Theatre. Madame and her son lived in it alone, with their simple establishment of two maids and a man-of-all-work; alone, save that for some few months now, a charming young French demoiselle, who was soon, rumour ran, about to make her *débüt* on the boards of the said theatre, had been located with them, with an old attendant. Little accustomed though he was to retail gossip, Lord Haredale repeated this to his wife. It was a singular thing that he should; to be noticed afterwards.

One morning, when they had barely got settled, Lady Haredale

observed a young girl in a proximate room of the adjoining house. She was sitting down, studying something that appeared to be music.

"It is the young *débütante*," thought the Countess. "I wish I could hear her sing."

As if in echo to the unheard wish, the young lady began to warble a few bars now and again, as if carried away by the study in her hand. Finally, when she put down the score and rose, she burst out into the freedom of a whole verse, like one whose task is over. The verse was English; the old song was English; and a thrill ran through Lady Haredale as she listened; for something in the tone of the voice brought back to her a memory of the past. Her sister used to sing that very song; her sister had one of the most sublime of voices, never a better one heard in public or private; her sister who had died at three-and-twenty of consumption.

And now, as the verse came to a close, the sweet and brilliant tones dying on the air, the young lady approached the window, and another impression arose to Lady Haredale. Had she not seen the face before? It was a lovely face, delightful to look upon, but it certainly seemed not quite strange to her. Only a momentary glimpse did she catch of it, for the girl, seeing herself observed, blushed in modesty and drew away.

Lady Haredale took an opportunity of inquiring the name of the young lady, and whether she was really French; asking in pure curiosity.

"Oh yes, all French," she was answered; "a young *demoiselle*, well reared and connected, it was understood; whose divine voice had attracted the attention of the great master, Weber; he had heard her in some French cathedral that he had stepped into accidentally; her name *Mademoiselle Martin*."

The face continued to haunt Lady Haredale, the voice also in a less degree; vaguely both; as the Christmas chimes heard in childhood haunt our minds in after-years, awakening melancholy chords. But although each time she looked at her, the unuttered cry arose, Where have I seen that face? although, as the soft wind wafted across to her ear the snatches of song from that marvellous voice, something in the sounds brought with them invariably a remembrance of the sweet songs of her girlhood's home; no instinct, no subtle fancies, no cunning dream came to Elizabeth, Countess of Haredale, to whisper to her that she at length beheld face to face her long-lost, long-mourned, long-prayed-for Lucy.

For, you see, Lady Haredale had been accustomed to picture the poor stolen one as a miserable little beggar-girl, going about in rags and tatters; or at best (relative to attire) dancing at fairs in paint and spangles.

(To be continued.)

OUR LOG-BOOK.

THE end of art is not so much to satisfy as to create a noble unrest, in which lies the root of a deeper repose. George MacDonald's "Bonnie Annie" in "Alec Forbes" certainly struck deep, when she declared her preference for the stories and songs that "gar ye greit." The inmost fibre of human nature is not stirred effectively save to finest issues; and the activity that comes of the harmonious adjustment of ordinarily conflicting faculties is, after all, the repose which we hear so often spoken of as the last result of true imaginative product. In one word the effect should be uninvolved, simple—determined by one leading spiritual tone. The intellect may be satisfied with a perfect demonstration; it is because life is so fluent as to overflow all verbal lines and boundaries, that art only satisfies by returning finally on the pathetic mystery of the inexpressible and seeking centre there. Now, though the bulk of novels in no sense satisfy, but only excite and distract, that is something different from saying that they rise to the level of art. A true work of art satisfies, not in the sense of presenting a complete or exhaustive system or plan of life, but rather by a sensible yet gradual widening and brightening of the horizon of sympathy, like the softened far-charging glory of sunrise. The novel, as we now for most part have it, tends to throw back the sympathies upon themselves, and to make all the faculties helpless vassals of egotistic fancy or vain dreaming, continually needing to be fed by fresh excitements. This is an ignoble unrest, inasmuch as it unfits for healthy and helpful effort and sympathy. Whatever even in the remotest degree approaches to genuine creation gradually grows in meaning and purpose; there is in it an unnameable something which lightens and lifts itself more and more above the mere "feet of clay," the body in which it dwells, imparting to all the portions, however trifling in themselves, a spiritual significance far beyond what its author himself could have dreamed. "It is an indubitable piece of nature herself," and all things are involved in it by secret but unending lines of relation. Novalis makes stars and flowers talk to each other, and both at a certain stage begin to speak a *common language* to Heinrich, his hero; and however absurd this may appear read as hard fact, it is absolutely true viewed as symbolic of the artistic life. Wherever things or characters, in themselves foreign to each other, are brought together in such arbitrary and accidental associations as to surprise, puzzle, and excite, without any supervening sense of likeness, affinity, or hidden harmony, then we have

manufacture, however clever, dextrous, and complete it may seem to be. And when we say that Mr. Dickens himself has frequently interjected an element of discord into his works by introducing such characters, we put ourselves beyond risk of being accused of choosing an obscure illustration. Skimpole, for instance, is such a character, with no real or natural place in the story, but rather put in because of a certain characteristic weakness in Jarndyce, on which he is set to play mechanically. It were idle to instance cases from the ordinary run of novels. The characters are not developed, they are not necessary to each other, and are only there that each may help a point in the others. It is a game of shuttlecock, happily bounded in its range. The ordinary novel fails to satisfy, because it consciously aims at ignoring the higher faculties altogether; and this is doubtless the reason of the strong prejudice which exists among a large intelligent and influential class against works of fiction. It is excitement, strong, direct, and immediate, that is being more and more sought in the novel, and it is thus easy to understand how this kind of literature is so rapidly declining as art. Effect is more and more sought to be gained from separate portions and points; no regard is had to the whole, and trick instead of insight rules and dominates all. Yet the novelists are so far short-sighted, even in view of their own ends. There is always the chance that, for a genuine work, there will be a steady and lasting demand; whereas for that which is merely exciting, however powerful, there is no hope even of a second reading. A second reperusal, indeed, instead of heightening the interest, palls and disgusts. Just now, it seems to us that the writers of fiction are somewhat like the lean kine of Pharaoh, which ate up all the fat ones. It is the *interest* of all concerned that the novel should be raised more and more to the level of art.

We are concerned this month with three writers who have done something towards proving the possibility of raising the novel to this level, and that without sacrificing any of the broad elements of interest. It certainly says much for the character of a religious magazine, both as respects its literature and the liberality of its tone, that it should have given to its readers, simultaneously, two such works as George MacDonald's "Seaboard Parish" and Edward Garrett's "Occupations of a Retired Life," which have just been put into our hands together. The subjects have a deal in common—both are the reminiscences of old men engaged in Christian and philanthropic objects, and both are worked out with a certain indirect view to "teaching." Yet, save in merest outline, the works are as different as well could be—are in fact the very antipodes of each other. We do not know how we could better express the difference than by saying, that all the reality of the one is artistic, and all the art of the other sober uncoloured reality. What we mean is this: Mr. MacDonald never seems to see life on its own unrelieved levels of monotony and

sordidness, of struggling but unheroic goodness and sacrifice, but always through a certain haze of artistic meditateness, which colours and enwraps all, and which is only relieved by the occasional directness of his dogmatic tone, here and there rising almost to eager earnest oracularness. Edward Garrett, again, sees life very truly, and very sharply, though his vision is confined. Indeed, he seems to us occasionally to exhibit a certain over-clearness as of shortsightedness, which we might regard as excusable in a person jotting down his impressions as he went along, but which is scarcely faithful to the idea of experiences recovered even in the memory of an old man. It is possible to be too real—too true for art.

“—The past doth always win
A glory from its being far,
And orbs into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein.”

It is because of this that we are ever dissatisfied with our diaries, old letters, and scraps of reminiscence, when we look back upon them from a distance. We see them in the light of a new experience which they do not express, and to which they are almost foreign; it is this which art restores and imparts illusively to the very form of our old experiences; and the point of our criticism will perhaps more plainly appear when we say, that Mr. MacDonald imports so much of this illusion as to destroy the body of reality, the author in this instance being ever clearly seen behind the vicar; while Edward Garrett imparts too little of it, and oppresses us with a sense of over-distinctness. Everything with him is almost held out before us in equal relief, the movement is too uniformly sharp and unrestful, while the whole somewhat wants shading and neutral tint. There is unmistakeably great strength, clearness, felicity, and occasional aptness of rendering; but at the same time such an unreserve, such an indifference to those peculiar undershades of feeling and motive and experience, that we are compelled on this account continually to think of Ruth, for instance, as a very harsh, quizzical, and disagreeable person, notwithstanding her active goodness and self-denial. In one word, she is too self-assertive and open; her inner life is brought too near us through her common acts; so near, indeed, that we are apt to confound them; and it never seems to have struck the writer to remind us, that there was an element in Ruth that eluded even her brother's clever eye and pen. Göthe says, significantly, “Women are silver saucers into which we put golden apples. My idea of women is not one abstracted from the phenomena of actual life at all, but it is innate in me, or has sprung up in me, God knows how. My feminine portraiture has all come clean from the mould; they are better than you could find in the real world.” It would, perhaps, be wrong were we to say that Ruth is drawn too much from “the phenomena of actual life,” but certainly that ideality or repose, which must have been

one of the parents of her influence, is not brought so vividly before us as it might have been. Mr. MacDonald gives us too much middle distance; Edward Garrett too little. The one has no foreground, or throws over it the pearly mists of morning, suffusing all the characters with it so that they lose outline; the other is almost all foreground, so that the eye gets wearied with the imposing sharpness and oppressive-variety of ever-shifting detail. The characters of the one—especially the female characters—are refined away to mere shadows by this intervening medium; the characters of the other are brought so close to our eyes and held there, that we cannot read their finer, subtler shades of expression or most characteristic movements. But both are beautiful works; rich in picture and lesson. Mr. MacDonald is well tried; from Edward Garrett we hope for much hereafter. There is one point in reference to the teaching in Mr. MacDonald's novel which we are somewhat at a loss how to interpret. He is so possessed by certain spiritual forms of truth, that his belief in them, as obtruded at every convenient point and turn, can almost be dramatically justified only by their victory. We are therefore at a loss to account for Mr. Percivale's being left here to the end possessed by his "doubts," and unpenetrated by Mr. MacDonald's teachings. Were it not for the salient aim and object of "Robert Falconer," so recently re-issued, we would have concluded that Mr. MacDonald's art was making him, perforce, more liberal and more tolerant, especially that such a story should have ended in such a way in the magazine in which it originally appeared. How is it? We feel ourselves nonplussed.

Mrs. Macquoid has all Edward Garrett's clearness and some of Mr. MacDonald's subtlety of touch, though with none of his eager theological prepossessions. She can shape out a character clearly, and gradually present it more by careful suggestive touches than continuous detail. She knows something of the mystery of growth, and tries to give it place in her presentments of character. She feels the worth of a middle distance, and can spiritualize very subordinate details and characters. But it has been singularly unfortunate for Mrs. Macquoid that she has allowed herself to be influenced (though even, in some cases, by repulsion) by so many different schools of novelists. She can be truly individual, "Hester Kirton" proved as much, clearly and conclusively; but she has looked too much from this side to that, and has never since risen above it, if she has, on the whole, even reached its level. She has done clever, finished work; given us some of the finest hints and glimpses and promises, but we feel dissatisfied, and are still pointed forward. From her insight, her consistency, and her delicate reserve, we feel that it is difficult to calculate her orbit. In occasional truth, in fresh conceptions of character, in felicity of final and artistic rendering, she came as near to George Eliot as almost any living female writer in her "Hester Kirton"; but it seems to us she is either im-

patient or hasty, and fails to weave so closely together as she might the living threads which she shows that she holds so freely in her hand. Young Marjorie, in "Wild as a Hawk," is skilfully painted, in her capricious changefulness and slow, gradual dawning of genuine womanliness; so is Dorcas, so is old Burn—with those slow, self-centred and hard fibrous characters Mrs. Macquoid is very happy—and Nelly Burn is excellent. Mrs. Macquoid usually fails with her rascals. Royston is hardly consistent or genuine; Murray Keene, though effective and useful, is in many respects improbable; and in this he is like the other Marjorie, the schoolmistress. We expect much from Mrs. Macquoid: she is a faithful student of life and character, and may produce a novel fit to take first rank and to live. So much for our three writers.

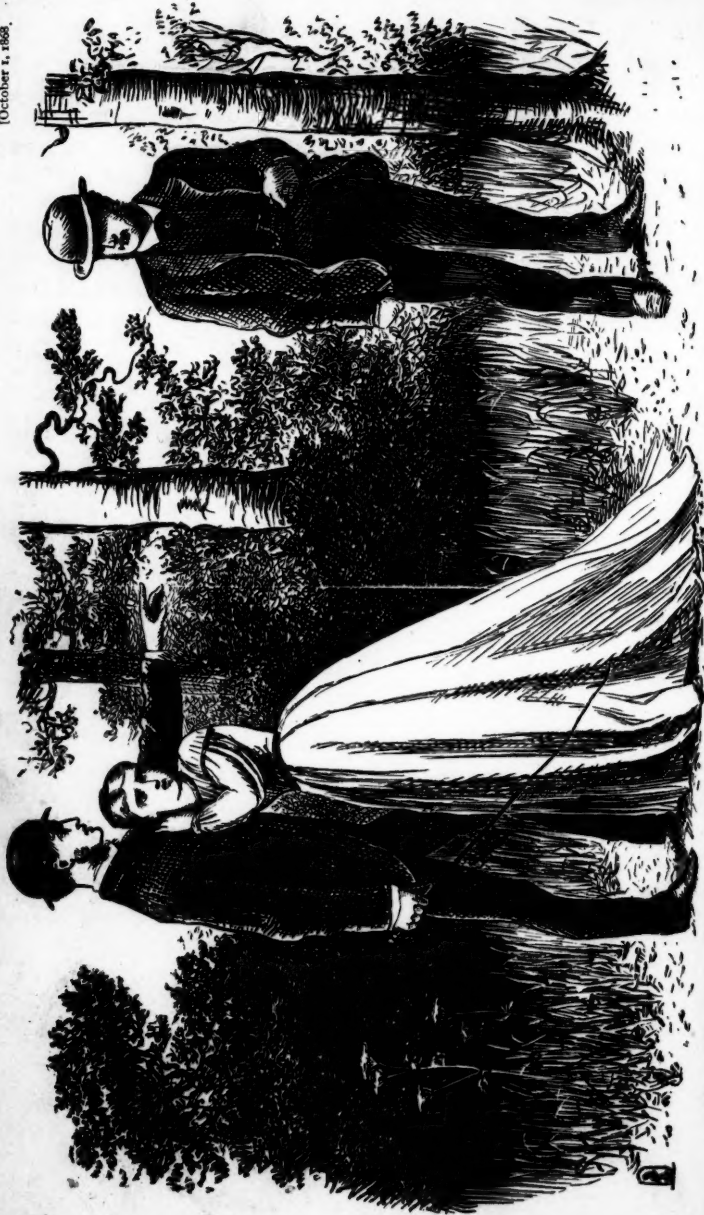
Mr. De Leifde's "Beggars" is a piece of genuine historical romance, full of incident, and not wanting in colour and lesson. There is, perhaps, just a shade too much of the pious conversation introduced often, as it appears to us, gratuitously, which tends not seldom to spoil perspective and verisimilitude; but the author knows the trick of keeping everything in movement before his reader. We observe, too, some peculiar errors, whether due to author or printer we know not. The "Headless Counts," for instance, being not only decapitated, but depeditated and refused their due of footnote. Poor Counts! But the book is really a good and lively one, and we cordially recommend it.



DAYS OF CHILDHOOD.

O DAYS of joy and gladness! return, if but in dreams,
That again my feet may wander beside the wild-wood streams,
Through their dim and shadowy mazes, in fancy as of yore—
I may forget life's changes and be a child once more.

Most surely I am nearing the temple of life's noon,
Adown the sloping hill-side I shall be journeying soon.
Alas! my step has changed, my voice has lost its glee;
Never again will childhood, save in dreams, return to me.



"How dare you presume to molest this young lady?..... If you ever dare to touch her against her will again, sir, I will horsewhip you."